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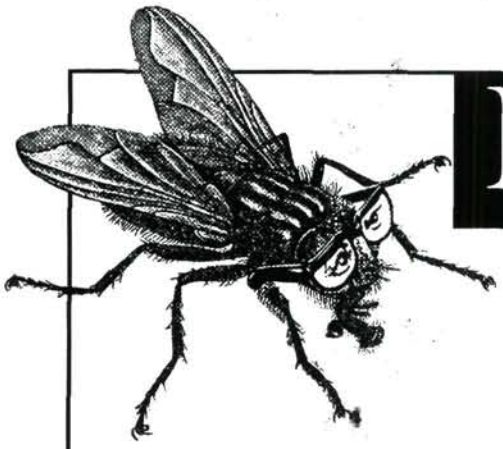

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4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Trial lawyers are not bloodsucking ambulance chasers, &c.

6 **PAUL BERMAN** TRB: DOUBLE PIERCE George W.'s historical twin.

9 **THE EDITORS** UNWELCOME BACK What we saw at the Republican convention.

10 **NOTEBOOK** The good, the bad, and the ugly (mostly the bad and the ugly) from Philly.

13 **LAWRENCE LESSIG** TIE GAME My Microsoft problem and ours.

14 **KARL MAIER** GUSAU DISPATCH: NORTHERN EXPOSURE When democracy = *sharia*.

15 **ANDREW SULLIVAN** PARENTAL DISCRETION The topic the Cheneys won't discuss.

17 **FRANKLIN FOER** CONVENTION DISPATCH: BROTHERLY LOVE In love with Hoffa.

18 **RYAN LIZZA** CONVENTION DISPATCH: SUITE TALK The other, better GOP convention.

20 **DAVID GRANN** CONVENTION DISPATCH: MINORITY PARTY Being a black Republican.

23 **MICHELLE COTTLE** CONVENTION JOURNAL: PHILADELPHIA STORY Five days of elephant hats, prank calls, Texas fight songs, drunk delegates, and frisky guard dogs, as the GOP gets in touch with its sensitive side.

28 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: A HOMELAND Abbas Kiarostami's *The Wind Will Carry Us* is slow, difficult, and undramatic. It is also a masterpiece.

29 **JED PERL** ON ART: ORDINARY MAGIC Jean-Siméon Chardin, who made artistic miracles out of everyday life.

34 **PETER DAVISON** POEM *Under the Language Sea*

35 **PAUL STARR** THE PUBLIC VANISHES *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* by Robert D. Putnam

37 **ALEXANDER STAR** BEING AND KNOWINGNESS *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* by Dave Eggers

40 **ALAN TAYLOR** THE FORGOTTEN WAR *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* by Fred Anderson

46 **JAMES WOOD** PHILADELPHIA DIARIST: LIFE IS SWEDE

On the Cover : *The Signing of the Constitution* by THOMAS P. ROSSITER, Independence National Historical Park - Library, National Park Service; lettering by PHILIP FELIX
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CORRESPONDENCE

Hostile takeover

TO THE EDITORS:

The July 3 pieces by Jonathan Chait ("Golden Mean") and Michelle Cottle ("Boring Like a Fox") ruminating about the direction of the Gore campaign both skirt around a winning strategy for the vice president, one that has its origins with George W. Bush's dad.

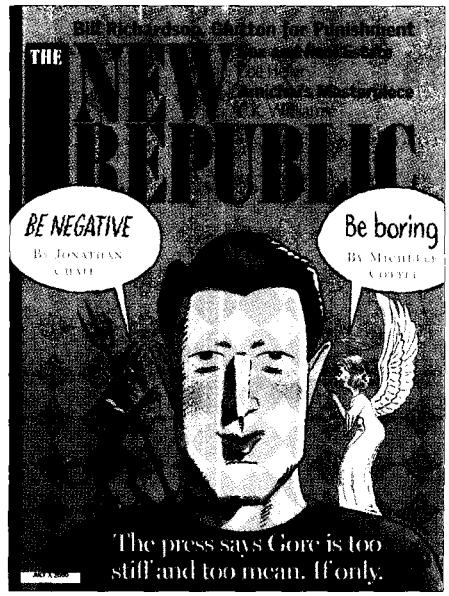
In 1988, with Massachusetts's then-Governor Michael Dukakis talking about his demonstrated record of getting things done (the "Massachusetts miracle"), George Bush found himself the front man for an eight-year-old regime that had apparently run out of steam. The Bush campaign decided it had to attack the record of achievement and competence that Dukakis was trumpeting before voters would give the boring and bland veep a serious look. And campaign manager Lee Atwater gleefully spent the rest of the campaign doing just that.

Fast-forward twelve years, and the similarities are striking. Like Atwater, Al Gore's people will have to attack W.'s phony success on education and his miserable environmental and consumer-rights records. This isn't going negative, since it is based on the record that the candidate has compiled. Once Gore has recast Bush's alleged successes, then voters will pay more attention to the differences between the potential Gore and Bush administrations on guns, taxes, Social Security, campaign finance reform, the environment, and the Supreme Court. Until then, Gore looks like a vice president playing catch-up with nothing of substance to say—just like W.'s dad did until Atwater smashed the "miracle." Turnabout is fair play.

STEVE SOTO
Sacramento, California

TO THE EDITORS:

I was much amused by Jonathan Chait's piece on why Al Gore needs to "go negative" in order to win the presidency. In the course of his article, Chait as good as concedes that the vice president has no ideas of his own to offer, is incapable of inspiring the populace (much less gaining its affections), and has an embarrassing history of lying (those "slanted" versions of his life story, his "invention" of the Internet, etc.). Given these deficits, Gore's only hope of winning the White House, in Chait's opinion, is to get nasty and start trashing George W. Bush. Chait should reflect on his own (very sound) assessment of Gore's shortcomings and ask himself why, whether by fair means or foul, he wants to put this empty vessel in the White House.



G.R. PATERSON
Wilmette, Illinois

Trial and error

TO THE EDITORS:

In her article "Rights and Wrongs" (July 3), Jodie Allen espouses the view that Americans overstate their rights. While I sympathize with her concern, the picture she paints of trial lawyers as bloodsucking ambulance chasers is inaccurate.

Allen, like most critics of trial lawyers, points to only the most preposterous examples in tort law to support her claims. Out of the many cases that go through our courts, it's easy to find a few absurdities. It is also easy to point to higher insurance premiums and other costs as the only outcome of a litigious society. But doing so means forgetting the benefits that Americans derive from the work of our "ambulance chasers"—benefits like no longer being poisoned by asbestos or avoiding being burned to death in a car whose design is grossly unsafe, like the Ford Pinto. The benefits of a litigious society are not concentrated solely in the pockets of trial lawyers, as Allen implies. In fact, if it weren't for our trial lawyers and those so-called ridiculous punitive damages they seek, corporate America would be freer than it already is to compromise our welfare for the sake of a bottom line.

TYLER TORNABENE
Olympia, Washington

Party line

TO THE EDITORS:

Lara Santoro's article about the conflict between Uganda and Rwanda ("False Dawn," July 3) accounts for the recent

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military debacle in Congo but hastens to assign blame with some confused historical information and shortsighted judgments.

Santoro is right in her description of the military debacle that has resulted in Rwandans and Ugandans turning against one another and exploiting the Congolese and their resources; but these countries' original intention to seal their borders against Interahamwe guerrillas operating from eastern Congo was a legitimate expression of security concerns. Western aid may have been ill-directed when it was made available for the current military buildup, but Santoro oversimplifies when she suggests that the governments of Yoweri Museveni in Uganda and Paul Kagame in Rwanda are nothing more than disguised military dictatorships. This is, of course, the argument of the Ugandan opposition to Museveni, but one of the major voices behind that opposition is that of Milton Obote, twice prime minister of postcolonial Uganda, who manipulated the democratic process to reduce it to disastrous personal rule. Idi Amin first came to power in a 1971 coup that was widely applauded because Uganda's people were fed up with the authoritarian incompetence of Obote's first rule, in the 1960s.

Rwandans could not have joined Museveni in rebellion in the Ugandan bush in the '60s, as Santoro claims, because Museveni was a student at the University of Dar Es Salaam during that period. He took to the bush to mount a guerrilla resistance when Obote stole the supposedly democratic election of 1980 in Uganda.

Western journalists and readers usually don't think twice about the logic of Museveni's argument that multiparty elections have been exercises in ethnic and religious exploitation in Uganda's history; they assume that without parties there can be no genuine democratic elections. They ought to read the Federalist Papers for an alternative American account of the risks of parties, and then reread Uganda's postcolonial history, before they pressure the constitutionally formed popular government of Uganda to open its doors to people who continue to take their marching orders from Obote.

BONNIE SHULLENBERGER
WILLIAM SHULLENBERGER
Ossining, New York

Property values

TO THE EDITORS:

I'm neither the editor nor the publisher of *Sex and Real Estate*, though I've edited and published Marjorie Garber's work in the past. I gather that Zoë Heller didn't much like Garber's new book, which she endeavors to rip apart in her tedious review ("House Arrest," July 3). How convenient that the author is a professor, and at Harvard no less. May professors be confined to academic books brimming with academese, infrequently reviewed or read, and the taint—call it theory, or cultural studies, or "academic trade" prose—kept safely away from impressionable readers.

But why exactly is Heller so fired up about a breezy little book that brings some intellectual traction, along with fun, to a light subject? No one who reads Garber's books on Shakespeare, transvestism, or bisexuality would doubt her astonishing command of research, scholarly and popular. I enjoy and admire Garber's work; Heller doesn't. Fair enough, but lengthy ridicule doesn't add up to a review. In the author's earlier work Heller finds psychoanalysis, puns, things French, subtitles, essays gathered together, acknowledgments. Shocking stuff. And now, an "entertainment," to borrow Graham Greene's term. Let the "gal" (Heller's sensitive choice of words) write more casually on a topic less weighty than gender formation or *Macbeth* and the result is equally the subject of derision.

If the book isn't worth reviewing, why all the space? I think the readers of TNR deserve better than Heller's weary screed.

WILLIAM GERMANO
New York, New York

ZOË HELLER REPLIES:

The fact that Marjorie Garber is a Harvard professor is not convenient, but it is pertinent, given the low standard of the book she has written. William Germano and I can agree that *Sex and Real Estate* is both "breezy" and "little." On the matter of its "intellectual traction," however, or of Garber's "astonishing command of research," I'm afraid I shall have to persist in differing. It's true, the book did irritate me. But then Germano is a guy apparently incensed by the word "gal." There's no accounting for sensitivities. ■

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Double Pierce

WHY DO STREET protests take place during the national political conventions and not on some other solemn, quadrennial political date—for instance, Election Day? It is due to sheerest chance, frozen into custom. Abbie Hoffman and friends organized demonstrations at the Democratic Party's Chicago convention in 1968 because the rhythm of antiwar and black-power uprisings during the spring of that year called for a militant summertime follow-up, and the Democratic convention offered a good occasion for it.

But by Election Day the insurrectionary mood had subsided, and there was no way to organize any sort of national protest. I happened to spend part of Election Day hanging around with Hoffman, in my capacity as a teenage revolutionary, and I know he would have loved to organize mass demonstrations about any number of issues. He was angry at the war, at racism, at America. He was angry at the administrators of the City College of New York, who were failing to cave in to the extortionate demands of a wild-eyed group of student radicals. Above all, he was angry that, due to Election Day blue laws, the bars were closed. A free country, and you can't get a drink? He contemplated organizing a minor riot, or perhaps a major one, on Third Avenue, where there were a lot of bars. But Third Avenue remained at peace.

So the precedent was set. Americans do not demonstrate on Election Day. They demonstrate—as they did last week in Philadelphia—outside conventions. By now, convention protests have the feel of well-established civic rituals—like the balloons and buttons of an election campaign, except more plaintive and expressive. They have become so familiar that we forget they are new. And yet until 1968 there was no such custom, even if, from time to time over the centuries, small-scale protests did occasionally break out.

You could argue that, in the premodern age, civic-minded patriots felt no need to riot *outside* the convention halls because a sufficient number of properly motivated people, upholding all known points of view, enjoyed a fulsome opportunity to riot *inside* the halls. And it is true that, in the past, America enjoyed some splendidly colorful conventions. I cite, not entirely at random, the Democratic National Convention of 1852, held in Baltimore, Maryland. The delegates arrived in Baltimore holding all kinds of opinions. They were pro-slavery and anti-slavery, pro-South and pro-North, in favor of an interventionist American foreign policy and against it. They had no idea whom they would nominate for president.

There were well-known potential candidates from the North, from the South, and, in the person of Stephen Douglas of Illinois, from the West. There were bruising debates. The Northern delegates could not abide a Southern candidate, and the Southern delegates had no interest in a Northern candidate. Douglas might have been a proper compromise. But Douglas's opinions were deemed pro-South, which made him anathema to the North. So the battle wore on. The name of the politician who would ultimately win was entered into nomination only on the thirty-sixth ballot. He didn't secure the nomination until the forty-ninth.

The candidate was Franklin Pierce. He was a former senator from New Hampshire, which made him acceptable to the North. Yet his ideas were pro-South, which endeared him to the Southern delegates. He had a boyish chin and curly hair. Political parties and conventions do try to assemble national coalitions with sufficient vastness to win elections. From that legitimate and necessary perspective, nominating Pierce was a brilliant idea. He won, too.

But parties and conventions are also supposed to express and clarify ideas. And in that respect the Pierce nomination was a disaster. The whole point of his candidacy was to bury the controversies of the day under the absurdity of a politician whose natural personality pointed in one direction and whose ideas pointed in another. No one had ever really believed that Pierce was a man of talent. He had never done anything particularly notable. He was nominated because he was electable, and for no other reason.

As president he made a few feeble gestures at spreading America's democratic revolution abroad. His State Department ordered America's ambassadors to wear ordinary business dress instead of the feudal livery worn by ambassadors from other countries. One of Pierce's hotheaded diplomats conspired to assassinate Louis Napoleon, the dictator of France, in hopes of setting off a world revolution. No such thing occurred. Instead, the United States sank into its own mud. Bleeding Kansas began to bleed under Pierce. Civil war drew closer. The man from New Hampshire with no obvious talent became a president with no achievements. And so, while it is good to have a convention filled with controversy, oratory, conspiracy, suspense, and surprise endings, it is not good enough.

I cite the 1852 convention not entirely at random because, on the side of his mother, Barbara Pierce Bush, George W. Bush is related to Pierce in a distant-cousinly way (even if Barbara Bush is not Franklin Pierce's thrice-great-niece, as has been incorrectly reported). Last week's Republican convention in Philadelphia did everything possible to avoid looking like the Baltimore convention of 1852. It was dull, staged, fake, and orderly instead of thrilling, chaotic, authentic, and unpredictable—at least as seen through the magic lens of my journalist's lead time. Yet the outcome has been virtually the same, down to the DNA traces.

For why has George W. Bush been nominated? It is because W., at heart, is a New England man with Southern ideas, a generous personality with ungenerous instincts, a man who obscures rather than clarifies the controversies of the moment. He has been nominated because he is electable. A true Franklin Pierce, not just biologically.

Why do street protests take place every four years outside the political conventions? It is not just because of the happenstances of 1968 and not just because the conventions used to be colorful and no longer are. It is because a proper convention ought to represent democracy at its best—the American people, openly deliberating. That usually doesn't happen. For it has always been easier for the party bigwigs to choose some hapless nominee instead of a leader, send a couple of incongruous phrases booming from the podium, and strike up the band. And if, in your democratic stubbornness, you would still prefer to see leaders and ideas and controversies, openly aired? Well, you won't find them in the street protests either, by and large. But at least you will see a genuine frustration genuinely expressed, there in the streets outside the convention hall.

PAUL BERMAN

PAUL BERMAN is author of *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968*.

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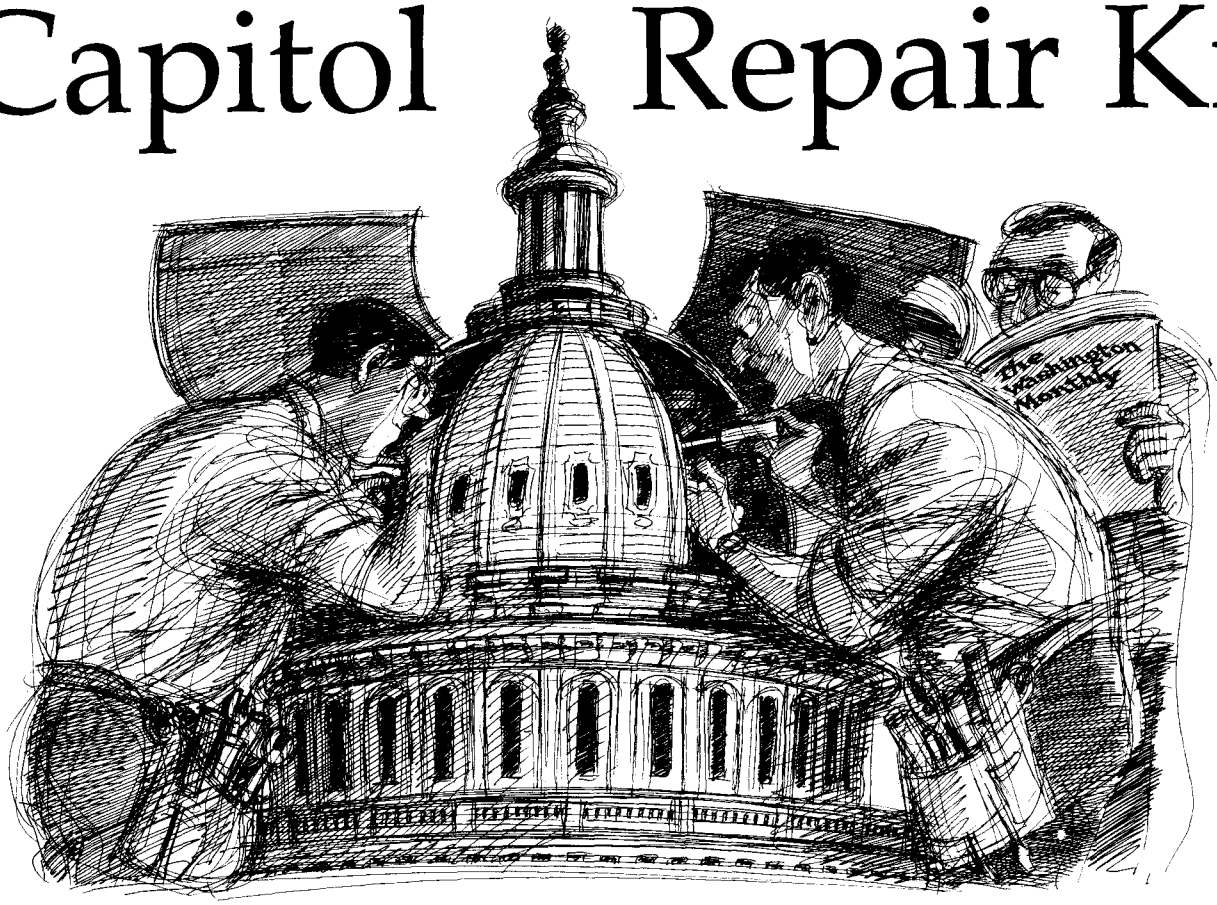

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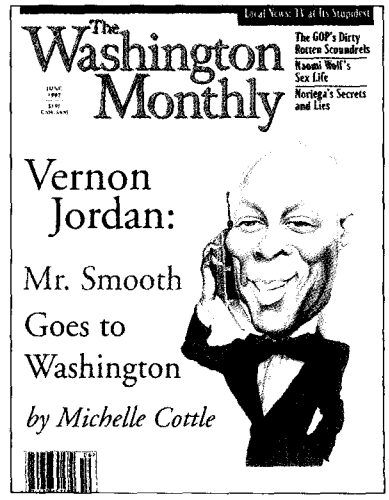

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Unwelcome Back

LAST WEEK'S REPUBLICAN convention, so carefully designed to obscure what the GOP actually believes, revealed at least one thing. For more than a year now, George W. Bush has proudly called himself an internationalist.

And, for more than a year, two camps have battled to define the term. To Bush's few neoconservative advisers, it means America should be unafraid to use force abroad and unashamed to use it in pursuit of moral principle. Within Team Bush, they have vied with a chorus of former counselors to Bush père, unsentimental practitioners of realpolitik who regard American material interests as the only things worth defending. The convention, and the selection in the days preceding it of former Defense Secretary Richard Cheney as Bush's running mate, effectively ended that struggle: Poppy's crew has prevailed.

Personnel, as they say, is policy. And nowhere more so than in the case of the Texas governor, who, by his own admission, intends to lean heavily on others for foreign policy guidance. The big news of the convention's first night was Colin Powell's de facto coronation as W.'s prospective secretary of state. Back when he concentrated on foreign affairs, Powell took to the op-ed pages (while still in uniform) to argue against U.S. intervention in Bosnia and advised against evicting Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. To a Bush administration, he would bring a great deal of gravitas and a rather straightforward view of American military power: Don't use it.

It's unlikely Powell would get much of an argument from the star of the convention's second night, Bush's likely national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice. Rice learned at the knee of Poppy's man at the National Security Council, Brent Scowcroft, who found it "painful to watch Yeltsin rip the Soviet Union brick by brick away from Gorbachev" and who averted his gaze as Saddam crushed an Iraqi rebellion within sight of an American armored unit. In a bid to carry on his legacy, from the GOP's stage in Philadelphia Rice reiterated the trope that America cannot be "the world's 911." Meanwhile, the campaign's most prominent neoconservative and most imaginative adviser, Paul Wolfowitz, now seems destined to head the CIA (assuming Bush wins), where he would have little role in devising policy.

Given the emerging cast, it's a safe bet that a Bush foreign policy would lack that "vision thing." The Bush campaign talks less and less about promoting democracy, even though that was a centerpiece of Ronald Reagan's foreign policy (and of John McCain's challenge to Bush). True, George W. pledges to intervene when "it's in our national strategic interests." Oil fields, canals, sea-lanes, industrial centers—all these will be amply safeguarded by a Bush administration. But that's about it. Bush now calls himself a "clear-eyed realist." And as such, he says, he will refuse to employ American power to, among other things, halt "genocide in nations outside our strategic interest." He'll leave that to the United Nations. As the hard-boiled advisers at the candidate's side explain, "Superpowers don't do windows." The Bush team has even announced a plan to curtail America's military presence overseas. Not to worry, though. They'll build a Maginot Line in outer space.

But a Bush foreign policy will be about more than just crabbed realism. It will also be about ensuring that the business of American foreign policy is business. Consider the advice W. will get from Cheney. The former defense secretary takes a hard line on Iraq because with Saddam Hussein, as a business associate puts it, "it's personal." It certainly isn't ideological, because Bush's running mate has opposed putting moral pressure on virtually every other tyranny in recent memory: Iran, Libya, Cuba, Burma, South Africa. It's quite a record. Some American politicians have a soft spot for the totalitarianism of the atheist left; others, for dictatorships of the right. Cheney has happily indulged them all. In their insistence that the magical powers of the market will bring democracy, world peace, and much else besides, the Bush-Cheney ticket promises nothing so much as four more years of the Clinton administration's dollar diplomacy. As Rice puts it, in words that could just as easily have come from Sandy Berger, we must have "faith in the power of markets and economic freedom to drive political change." The Business Roundtable, which has been so pleasantly surprised by the foreign policy of the Clintonites, has nothing to fear from the Bushies' return.

Bush insists that his will be a "distinctly American internationalism." It will be nothing of the sort. In its blend of realism and economism, the Bush team is proposing a quintessentially European internationalism, under whose terms American foreign policy would become indistinguishable from that of a frankly cynical country like France. And that, finally, might be worse than no internationalism at all. ■

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NOTEBOOK

LEARNING CURVE: On day one of the Republican National Convention, the building was abuzz with talk of the educational miracles George W. Bush has performed in Texas. In her first major speech as a political spouse, Laura Bush spread the happy news: "The highly respected nonpartisan RAND study released just last week found that education reforms in Texas have resulted in some of the highest achievement gains in the country among all racial, socioeconomic, and family backgrounds. It happened because George led the way, focusing state money and schools' attention on reading." Within hours, Bill Bennett, Ralph Reed, Jack Kemp, Tommy Thompson, and Newt Gingrich had fanned out across the airwaves to drive home the message: The RAND study proves that Dubya has saved Texas's schools. The only problem is that it's not true. Though the study did show dramatic educational gains in Texas, it examined the period from 1990 to 1996, or, in the case of reading, to 1994—a year before Bush even took office. "The gains in Texas came through policies prior to Bush," says David Grissmer, the report's lead author. "They started in '85 [and went] to basically '95. He kind of came in on the tail end." Perhaps the Democratic running-mate handicappers should take another look at Ann Richards.

GENERAL ADMISSION: After Colin Powell's forceful opening-night speech, Republican grandees were quick to congratulate themselves on the big-tent bravery of letting a prime-time speaker advocate affirmative action, which the party platform would explicitly ban. But they may be braver than they realize; Powell's disagreements with the platform extend to virtually its entire domestic agenda. On prisons, for example, Powell commanded, "It's time to stop building jails in America and get back to the task of building our children." The GOP platform, by contrast, boasts that the Republican Congress "stopped federal judges from releasing criminals because of prison overcrowding" and promises "no-frills prisons ... that make the threat of jail a powerful deterrent to crime." On education, Powell pleads, "Let's not be afraid of standardized testing." But the platform is quite afraid, noting that "the Republican Congress rightly opposed attempts by the Department of Education to establish federal testing that would set the stage for a national curriculum." Powell explains that "if you want to solve our drug problem, you won't do it by trying to cut off the supply and arresting street pushers alone," but the platform celebrates "restor[ing] the nation's ability to strike at the source of illegal drugs," "a real war on drugs in place of the white-flag policies of recent years," and a Justice Department policy requiring "all federal prosecutors to aggressively pursue drug dealers, from the kingpins to the lackeys." Where Powell complains about "lobbyists who load our federal tax codes with preferences for special interests," the platform calls for "lower tax rates" for small business, "a three-year moratorium on new Internet taxes," "the ethanol tax credit," "a one-time exemption from capital-gains tax on the sale of farms," and "tax-deferred accounts to soften fluctuations in farm earnings." On Tuesday, *The Washington Post* proclaimed Powell "the party's most charismatic figure." Sure. But which party?

Separated at birth?

AL SHARPTON WILL HAVE HIS PEOPLE CALL YOUR PEOPLE: When Powell wasn't contradicting the Republican platform, he was proposing that the party hook up with some strange new allies. Seizing on Powell's call for Republicans to "listen to and speak with all leaders of the black community, regardless of political affiliation or philosophy," the Nation of Islam has expressed an interest in doing business with the GOP. Dr. Benjamin Muhammad, national director of the Nation of Islam's Million Family March, scheduled for this October, tells TNR, "If General Colin Powell can arrange a meeting to discuss public policy, to discuss platforms that strengthen families, we would be ready to meet." And Muhammad doesn't stop there. "Governor Bush," he muses, "we would like to see him address the national agenda of the Million Family March" in person. Tell Karen Hughes to clear the governor's schedule.

THERE GOES THE HINDU VOTE: We know that scrubbing the GOP clean of any intolerant, noninclusive, or uncompassionate stains in time for the convention took a Herculean effort. But, no matter how zealous their scouring, the Bushies still missed a few spots. In particular, they missed Washington Representative Jennifer Dunn. When she appeared on the convention's first night to introduce Franklin Graham—the Reverend Billy Graham's son, who was delivering that session's closing benediction—Dunn described Graham's evangelical organization, Samaritan's Purse, as having "saved the lives and souls of tens of thousands of suffering refugees." Saving lives seems a nonpartisan, inclusive endeavor. But souls? Wouldn't that mission, perhaps, alienate that important swing voter: the hell-bound heathen, i.e., the non-Christian?

RETURN OF THE JEDI: As John McCain took the stage to endorse Bush on Tuesday night, he was accompanied, as in his primary campaign, by the theme from *Star Wars*. Nothing wrong with that, right? Not until you remember how McCain used to weave the movie into his stump speeches, telling audiences, "I'm just like Luke Skywalker trying to get out of the Death Star.... They're shooting at me from everywhere. Everybody's against me. Governor Engler, Governor Bush, all the governors, all the senators. But we're going to kill them, right? We're going to get them."

LAURA BUSH: REUTERS/STEVE CRISP; JIM ROURKE/REUTERS

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NEXT UP, LEON FURTH: Also Tuesday, Bush National Security Adviser-in-Waiting Condoleezza Rice made her prime-time TV debut, thanking "a party that sees me as an individual, not as part of a group." Of course it does. After all, the GOP always invites potential national security advisers to make prime-time speeches, irrespective of race. Who can forget Richard Allen's high-profile oratory at the 1980 convention in Detroit, or John Poindexter's at the 1984 convention in Dallas, or Brent Scrowcroft's at the 1988 convention in New Orleans, or...?

FRIENDLY FIRE: Rounding out Tuesday night's focus on national security issues, retired General Norman Schwarzkopf—speaking via satellite from the deck of the retired battleship *New Jersey*, berthed across the Delaware River in Camden—accused the Clinton administration of weakening America's Armed Forces. "As of 1999, the number of fighting Army divisions ready for war had shrunk to less than half of what they were before Desert Storm," Schwarzkopf told the convention. "The Navy's battle force in the last eight years has been cut by one-third. And the Air Force reports that it is now called on to mount four times as many operations with a force that has been cut by forty percent." Terrible. But who's responsible? The number of Army divisions is down because of a post-cold-war Pentagon restructuring plan called the Base Force Review, conducted during the Bush administration by Joint Chiefs Chairman Colin Powell and approved in 1990 by Defense Secretary Dick Cheney. Similarly, decreases in the Navy's "battle force" result from a fleet-reduction decision made by Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci during the Reagan administration. (That reduction was achieved largely by retiring outdated vessels—such as the obsolete battleship from whose deck Schwarzkopf was speaking—and by decommissioning nuclear submarines that the Navy would have had to give up anyway under arms-control treaties.) Finally, there is Schwarzkopf's complaint that Air Force missions are up—it's true that the service has been strained—while the blue suits have "been cut by forty percent." But, as retired Admiral Bill Owens, who was Cheney's senior military adviser during the Base Force

VINT'S WEEK

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GOP Speaker Admits "Exaggerations"

Personal History, Ethnic Background of Rising Star Called into Question

PHILADELPHIA, August 3 — Alejandro Buendia, the Florida official whose prime-time speech brought the crowd to its feet on the first night of the Republican convention, yesterday admitted to falsifying large parts of his life story in order to obtain the high-profile speaking slot. Buendia's speech, "From *el Barrio* to the Big Tent: *Mi Sueño Americano*," contained a number of biographical details that, Buendia now concedes, were incorrect.

In his speech, Buendia said he had joined the Republican Party after federal bureaucrats denied him permission to open a free tutoring service for needy children in his neighborhood. In fact, Buendia now admits, he is a fifth-generation Republican whose first political involvement was as a volunteer to presidential candidate Pierre "Pete" DuPont. Buendia, 46, also apologized for neglecting to mention his years at Andover and Princeton in a section of the speech decrying the "lack of educational *oportunidad*" available to him in his youth.

But Buendia, who until May of this year went by the name Alexander Waldorf Goodday III, vigorously disputed widespread allegations that he had attempted to disguise his ethnic roots. At a hastily convened press conference, Buendia said he changed his name in tribute to a beloved great-uncle who had extensive business ties in Latin America. Buendia also defended the sprinkling of Spanish phrases throughout his speech (including the widely quoted reference to Gov. George W. Bush as "*el Queso Grande*") as a common mode of expression in his Palm Beach neighborhood. Buendia, who moved to Florida from Rhode Island earlier this year, explained, "In Newport, you have to know sailing. In Palm Beach, you have to know Spanish."

For their part, GOP officials insisted that the misleading details Buendia provided them were not responsible for his selection. "We are the party of Lincoln," explained a convention official. "Alejandro's inspiring story of accomplishment, not his apparent ethnic background, earned him that speaking role. *Viva Alejandro! Viva America!*" Buendia, a member of the Palm Beach zoning commission, was chosen over several

See SPEAKER, *A19, Col. 2*

Review, points out in his book *Lifting the Fog of War*, the "forty percent" reduction figure is a figment derived by comparing the present military budget to what it would have been, in real dollars, had the mid-'80s defense buildup continued indefinitely, something no one—certainly not Cheney—proposed after the crumbling of the Soviet Union. Looks like Schwarzkopf won't be joining his old associates in the next Bush administration after all.

OVER THE TOPPING: Team Bush did its best to banish from the convention all mention of what Republicans once claimed was their party's finest hour: last year's impeachment of President Clinton. Of the 13 House impeachment managers, only one of them, Representative Bill McCollum of Florida, received a speaking role, and that's because he's running for Senate. As former Louisiana Representative Bob Livingston, whose bid to become speaker of the House during the impeachment fiasco was scuttled because of his own extramarital affair, told a *New York Times* reporter in Philadelphia: "It's forgotten.... Whether the president was impeached or wasn't impeached really is a non-issue." But old obsessions die hard, particularly among diehards, and if you dig deep enough into this year's Republican platform, you find that *someone* in the party hasn't forgotten Clinton's Oval Office shenanigans. There, in Section Six (titled "Government for the People"), Paragraph Ten—in the middle of a screed against wasteful government—is what appears to be a veiled reference to the ruse Monica Lewinsky concocted in order to visit Clinton for their late-night trysts: "Twelve agencies administer over 35 food safety laws. One agency regulates pizzas with meat; another regulates vegetarian pizzas. (Still another regulates the people who deliver them. Enough said.)" Enough said, indeed.

DRUG TEST: There's been plenty of griping over the last week that Dick Cheney was not subjected to as rigorous a grilling as were those potential veeps he was supposedly screening. But the same could be said about the man Cheney joined on the GOP ticket. According to *The New York Times*, one of the 83 questions asked of those on George W. Bush's vice presidential shortlist dealt with past recreational drug use. Of course, when Bush was asked the same question by reporters, earlier in the campaign, he replied huffily, "I will not play the Washington, D.C., game of responding to rumor and innuendo" or issued vague non-disavowals like "When I was young and crazy, I was young and crazy." Think Frank Keating could've gotten away with that response?

MAYBE NEXT TIME THEY'LL TRY TO MAKE THE CONVENTION MULTICULTURAL: "I know that there is a Latino Republican presence at the convention. I'm wondering, why are some of those individuals not brought up to speak? It makes you wonder, do they really have any role in Bush's inner circle?"
—Marisa Demeo, regional counsel, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN, MOVE OVER: "I grew up in an American heritage that frowns on platitudes, on empty platitudes.... The human condition... is not a spectator sport. You cannot sit on the sidelines. We must engage in changing the world for the better.... We must all make sure we hook arms with George Bush and Dick Cheney to form a human chain that is totally engaged in transforming America for the better."
—Ohio Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell, Monday, July 31, in Philadelphia ■

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Microsoft misreads Professor Lessig.

Tie Game

By LAWRENCE LESSIG

MICROSOFT SAYS Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson made all sorts of errors when he found the company in violation of antitrust law and ordered its breakup this spring. But, according to Microsoft's latest brief, filed with the Supreme Court last week, no error was as blatant—or as crucial—as Jackson's reading of a 1998 court of appeals decision. The software giant says Jackson ignored the appeals court's ruling, even though it would have cleared Microsoft of wrongdoing. So obvious was the mistake, the brief says, that "even ... Professor Lessig"—someone the company has been quick to criticize—agrees that "Microsoft must prevail" if the decision is properly understood.

As an authority on Professor Lessig's work, I can attest that, indeed, the quotes are correct. In a brief written at Jackson's request, I did argue that if the 1998 court of appeals decision applied, then Microsoft had a case. But the key word is "if." I also wrote that, in my view, the 1998 decision didn't apply—that it had virtually no relevance to the present case. That part of my argument Microsoft left out.

There are hard questions in this case. This is not one of them. There's a straightforward explanation for why the 1998 decision doesn't apply to the present case. But Microsoft has persisted in making this argument nonetheless. And it seems determined to stick with it, all the way to the Supreme Court.

To understand why the 1998 decision is irrelevant, return to 1994, when Microsoft signed off on the contract in question in the first case—or, as lawyers call it, the "consent decree." Consent decree is just a fancy term for an agreement between the government and a party. In this instance, the government agreed to dismiss its then-pending charges of antitrust violations in exchange for a series of promises by Microsoft regarding its business practices.

At the time, one of the accusations was that Microsoft was using its market power in Windows 3.1 to protect its dominance in the operating system DOS. In particular, some said that Microsoft would sell a computer manufacturer Windows only if the manufacturer would also take Microsoft DOS. This practice is known as "tying," and, in the consent decree, Microsoft agreed not to tie its applications and operating systems in this manner.

But there was an exception built into the promise. The contract that Microsoft signed was not to be "construed to prohibit Microsoft from developing integrated products." Though an "integrated product" might, as a Microsoft lawyer explained it, be "conceptualized as a tie," the decree was not intended to have anything to do with such products.

Just what "integrated products" meant is what the appeals court decided in 1998. In the fall of 1997, the government charged Microsoft with breaching its promise. Microsoft was then bundling Internet Explorer (a program for surfing the World Wide Web) with Windows 95 (an operating system). The government said this was precisely the kind of tying that Microsoft had promised not to do. Microsoft disagreed: Internet Explorer and Windows 95 were "integrated products" and therefore excepted from the 1994 decree.

The case initially went before Jackson (the same judge who would later rule on the antitrust case). Though uncertain about the proper legal reading of "integrated," Jackson entered an injunction against Microsoft on the grounds that it was probably violating the consent decree. Microsoft appealed that injunction, and the court of appeals sided with the company. The court chose a broad definition of "integrated." If two products were designed to work together in a way that created any "plausible benefit" at all, the court concluded, then those two products would be considered "integrated" for purposes of the consent decree. Under this test, the court found that Internet Explorer and Windows 95 were probably integrated, lifted the injunction, and sent the case back to Jackson with instructions to determine whether in fact there was any "plausible benefit" from the design.

Though I didn't recognize it at first, this decision makes perfect sense. A mere consent decree couldn't dictate the law for each case—only the easy ones, those cases in which illegal "tying" was clearly happening. Questions concerning more complicated cases—say, when two programs did seem to offer benefits as a package—would have to be taken up separately if the government wished to pursue them. Certainly, this was Microsoft's understanding of the consent decree. As a lawyer for Microsoft explained to me during my brief tenure as special master in the case, "Although the development [read: creation] of such a product could be conceptualized as a tie, what the proviso tells the reader is that it is not to be construed that way for purposes of the consent decree—because the parties agreed that any claims of this nature would only be addressed in a plenary antitrust action under the Sherman Act."

SO MICROSOFT RIGHTLY prevailed before the appeals court. But that victory has absolutely nothing to do with the current case. The 1998 decision merely affirmed that Microsoft had abided by its promise to the government. The issue in the current case is one the consent decree doesn't cover: whether Microsoft is abiding by the law or whether bundling together programs like Internet Explorer and Windows violates antitrust statutes. In 1998, the court of appeals made it very clear that the two questions were different: "The antitrust question ... is distinct," it said. Microsoft itself conceded that the "consent decree does not bar a challenge under the Sherman Act." Yet this is precisely the argument Microsoft is now making. In its arguments

LAWRENCE LESSIG is a fellow at Berlin's Wissenschaftskolleg and will join the faculty of Stanford Law School in the fall. His book *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace* was published by Basic Books in 1999.

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before the district court, the court of appeals, and now the Supreme Court, Microsoft leaps from a true and sensible premise—that its "integration" of Internet Explorer with Windows did not violate the consent decree—to the false and unsupported conclusion that the court of appeals "held" that "integration" of Internet Explorer with Windows did not violate the Sherman Act.

The only way to read things differently would be to assume that the court of appeals in 1998 was intentionally using its power to interpret the consent decree to redefine the law of antitrust. But the antitrust law governing "tying" was not properly before the court of appeals. Even the most notoriously activist judge would think twice before doing something like that, and the panel of appellate judges who decided the 1998 case were, by any standard, advocates of judicial restraint. They were the last judges you'd expect to use a ruling on a consent decree to remake federal law.

None of this is to say Microsoft won't win its appeal—there are a thousand ways for the appeals court or the Supreme Court to rule in Microsoft's favor. But it is to say that such a victory was not assured by what the court of appeals did in 1998, notwithstanding what Professor Lessig said. ■

Gusau Dispatch

Northern Exposure

By KARL MAIER

NIGERIA'S CONSTITUTION PROHIBITS the state establishment of religion. But you wouldn't know it in the northern city of Gusau. Giant billboards scream GOD'S LAW IS SUPREME. On the dusty streets below, taxicabs display the image of a veiled woman or bear the inscription MATA KAWAI—literally, "women only." Packs of men gather on the roadside in their distinctive green-and-white uniforms, a religious militia on the lookout for prostitution, alcohol, and adultery. Bars and movie theaters have been closed, schools strictly segregated by sex, men told to wear beards, and women hidden beneath chadors. Thieves face amputation; adulterers, death by stoning.

This is life under *sharia*. Northern Nigeria's rush toward Islamic religious law began in January here in Gusau, capital of the state of Zamfara, on the remote edge of the Sahara desert; since then, five more states have followed suit, two of which adopted *sharia* last week. And with *sharia* has come bloodshed—riots between Muslims and Christians, a minority in the north, have already claimed 2,000 lives this year. The religious warfare engulfing northern Nigeria now poses the single greatest threat to President Olusegun Obasanjo's fledgling civilian government. But, strangely, it is also a product of it. For it was partly Obasanjo's election, the best thing to happen to Nigeria in years, that sparked the turmoil that may plunge Africa's largest country back into dictatorship, or worse.

KARL MAIER's latest book, *This House Has Fallen—Midnight in Nigeria*, was published by PublicAffairs in July 2000.

SHARIA HAS A checkered history in northern Nigeria. Early in the nineteenth century, a Muslim preacher, Usman dan Fodio, established a caliphate that observed *sharia* as civil and criminal law. But close to 100 years of British colonial rule tempered *sharia*'s influence—counterbalancing it with Western, more secular jurisprudence. When Nigeria gained independence in 1960, northern leaders kept that balance, opting for a penal code that included both Western concepts and *sharia*.

Then, in February 1999, Obasanjo was elected, ending a string of brutal military dictatorships. In a country long ruled by northern, Muslim generals, Obasanjo is a born-again Christian from the south. But his reputation as a detribalized hero of the 1967–1970 civil war initially assuaged northern fears; indeed, the only region of the country he lost was his native west, where voters thought him too pro-northern. But the end of military rule created a profound crisis of leadership in the north. The region's traditional emirs, the nominal symbols of Islam, had maintained close relationships with their brethren who dominated Nigeria's military dictatorships, often receiving salaries from the government. And the dismal failure of decades of northern rule to improve the quality of life in Nigeria's poorest region—according to a 1993 U.N. report, life expectancy in the far northern states of Zamfara and Sokoto was just 49 years—had left the region's political and religious leadership discredited. "There is a crisis of leadership in the north, a crisis of legitimacy," says Father Matthew Kukah, secretary general of the Catholic Bishops Conference. Forced by the ending of the dictatorship to respond to popular discontent, they turned to *sharia*. "People are just fed up, and *sharia* fills the vacuum," says Abba Kyari, a northern Muslim and chief executive of the United Bank for Africa, one of Nigeria's biggest banking institutions. "We have millions of people who have no food, no water, no education, no health care. But there is one thing common to them: religion."

The first to try Islamic law was Zamfara Governor Ahmed Sani, a member of the All People's Party, which opposes Obasanjo's People's Democratic Party. Sani extended *sharia* to both civil and criminal law, thus applying it to private as well as public actions, and he revived long-banned punishments such as amputation and stoning. Publicly, he promised that *sharia* would not affect the relatively small Christian communities in his state. But, during an interview in January, Sani admitted that Christians could be liable as well. "If we realize that the thieves in our state are Christians, we may have to change our stand," he said. "This Islamic law may have to be applicable to everybody in terms of crimes against the state." Stealing a television, he said, would be considered a crime against the state.

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And, indeed, *sharia* is quite popular among the northern electorate—at least its Muslim component. "Living in a state of *sharia* is living in a state guided by social justice," says Bilikisu Yusuf, a prominent journalist who works with Transparency International to promote good government and accountability in Muslim communities. But, about a mile away from the governor's palace, at the Pentecostal Eternal Life Bible Church—a ramshackle structure with a tin roof and wooden benches—the 41-year-old pastor, Sunday Akolo Ochi, expressed Christians' fears that Muslims are retaliating because they see Obasanjo's election as an assault on their community. "The Muslims are not happy that a Christian is in power," he said. "They are very upset that the president is probing past governments, because most of the corruption was carried out by the Muslims."

Clashes were inevitable, and the first erupted barely a month after Zamfara's embrace of *sharia*, in the former colonial town of Kaduna. Kaduna is one of the few cities that truly encapsulate Nigeria's religious, ethnic, and class diversity: mosques and churches, beer parlors and Koranic schools elbow each other for room. Relations between local Muslims and non-Muslims have always been tense, and in February a demonstration against *sharia* (posters said REST IN HELL *SHARIA* and *SHARIA* IS NOT Y2K COMPLIANT) by 5,000 Christians quickly turned violent. After one group broke away from the rally and attacked the state governor's offices, the Christian demonstrators and Muslim bystanders started fighting. Armed with axes, machetes, and guns, roving bands from both sides razed shops, office buildings, mosques, and churches while massacring civilians—sometimes beheading them, sometimes burning victims alive. The street warfare continued into the night and for the next two days, until Obasanjo dispatched army troops to restore order.

In all, at least 2,000 people died. Bodies littered the streets. Entire neighborhoods had been "religiously cleansed." And that wasn't the end of it. Many of the victims in Kaduna were Igbos, and, when their corpses started arriving in the Igbo heartland hundreds of miles to the southeast, enraged gangs of youths exacted their revenge on any northerner they could find, leading to dozens more deaths.

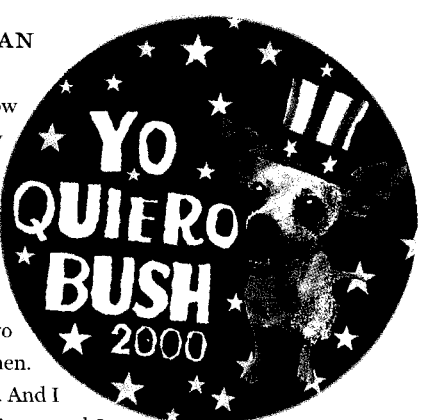
THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS Conference of Nigeria urged the government to "take vigorous action to halt this mad rush to national suicide." But there has been no such action. Obasanjo has refused to challenge *sharia* in the courts, despite its obvious constitutional vulnerability. Instead, he has tried quiet diplomacy. When he addressed the nation about the crisis on March 1, he blamed the bloodshed on "so many years of tyranny and mindless violence, encouraged and practiced by the state itself." And, as he reassured the international community of Nigeria's stability, he chose words oddly insensitive to the scope of the catastrophe: "Let me say for the benefit of investors in our economy that this tragic event is a hiccup that is not unusual for a nation like Nigeria, which has been oppressed and suppressed by its rulers in recent years. The hiccup will be put behind us and we will, *Insha Allah* [God willing], move full steam ahead."

Alas, it won't be that easy. In May, a new round of riots in Kaduna claimed up to 300 lives; in June, the governor of Kano, the most populous state in the north, announced that *sharia* would take effect there in November. The following month, six oil-producing states in southern Nigeria retaliated, pledging to assume control of their petroleum resources—a statement with clear secessionist implications. A communiqué signed by the state governors described *sharia* as "unconstitutional and an infringement of the rights of non-Moslems" and urged all southern graduates completing their national service in the north to return home. Some hiccup. As the Nobel Prize-winning Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka put it, "The roof is already burning over [Obasanjo's] head. He thinks it is not. He thinks that some accidental rain, which is the act of God or Allah, will put out the fire, but he had better understand that he has the responsibility of putting out the fire before it spreads." Part of the problem is that Obasanjo seems to regard the fighting as a vestige of Nigeria's authoritarian past, which will presumably fade as democracy grows more entrenched. But the reality is more disturbing. Democracy may indeed douse the fire eventually. But, in the short term, it is also the spark that set it alight. ■

There's something about Mary.

Parental Discretion

By ANDREW SULLIVAN



TONY SNOW: OK. Final: I know this is a touchy subject. Jerry Falwell puts out a comment saying that he supports you. He talks about your daughter's sexual orientation. Was that any of his business?

DICK CHENEY: My—I've got two daughters. They are fine women. I'm very proud of both of them. And I think their private lives are private, and I just firmly believe that. I'm running for public office; they're entitled to their privacy.

SNOW: Nothing like a father's love for his daughters.

CHENEY: Right.

A SIMPLE QUESTION no one seems to want to ask: If Dick Cheney loves and is proud of his openly lesbian daughter, why is he supporting a man who wants her to live under the threat of criminal sanction? It's no secret that Governor George W. Bush has publicly supported Texas's still-

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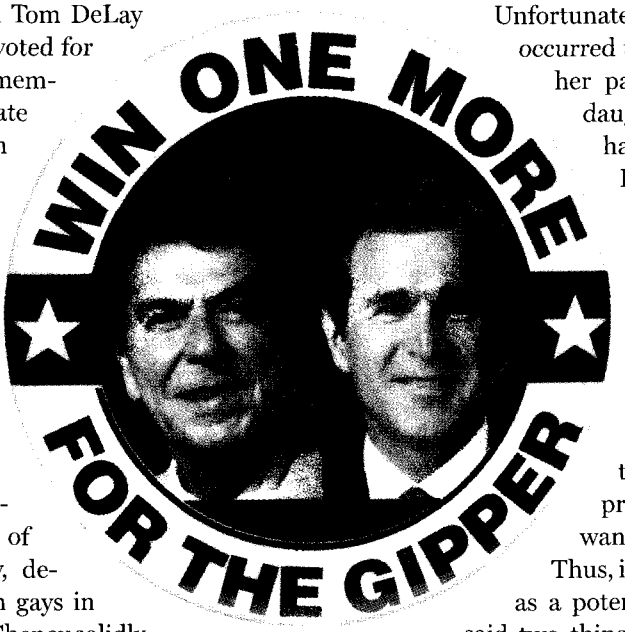
extant gays-only sodomy law, which makes private, consensual sex between gay adults a crime. Does Cheney agree with his running mate's position?

And what about his own public history on homosexual equality? On gay matters, Cheney's congressional record is not just bad. It's shocking. Cheney was one of only 13 representatives to vote against the landmark 1988 bill that initiated federal funding for AIDS testing and counseling—putting him to the right of even Tom DeLay and Dick Armey, both of whom voted for it. He was one of only 29 House members to vote against the 1988 Hate Crimes Statistics Act, which merely allowed the federal government to collect data on violent crimes based on race, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, and he voted for an amendment that added gratuitously anti-gay language to the bill. He supported measures to cut federal AIDS research and to allow health-insurance discrimination against people with HIV in the District of Columbia. As defense secretary, despite once describing the ban on gays in the military as an "old chestnut," Cheney solidly backed the old policy of harassment of gay soldiers and their ejection, however distinguished their records, from the Armed Forces.



How does Cheney square this history with his belief that his gay daughter, Mary, is "wonderful," "decent," and "hard-working"? I don't know, because the media, which evidently still doesn't regard gay rights as central to our politics, has barely asked. ABC's Cokie Roberts, for example, only brought up the matter at the very end of her interview with Lynne Cheney, the candidate's wife, on last Sunday's "This Week"—as a way of sympathizing with Cheney's plight of having a gay daughter exposed on the campaign trail! The usually dogged Tim Russert dropped the ball entirely in an almost half-hour-long interview with the would-be veep. Fox's Tony Snow raised the issue—but only to assert that it was none of anyone's business. *The New York Times*, for all its pretensions to have left homophobia behind, has barely touched the subject. *The Washington Post* buried it.

When asked, the Cheneys simply say the issue is private. According to *Newsweek*, Lynne Cheney has declared the topic off-limits: "I have just decided that the thing to do when the subject of either of my daughters comes up is to say, 'They are wonderful women.'" But this is a preposterous argument. Mary Cheney is a 31-year-old out lesbian. She lives with her partner in Colorado. Her last job was at Coors Brewing Company, where she was responsible specifically for outreach to the gay and lesbian population. She has funneled corporate money into gay causes and talked about homosexuality to redneck beer distributors. In a recent interview with *Girlfriends* magazine, a glossy publication targeted to a lesbian audience, Mary Cheney said, "The reason I came to work here [at Coors] is because I knew several other lesbians who were very happy here." According to *Salon*, she introduces her girlfriend as her "life partner," and, according to *Time*, she came out to her parents in the early '90s. Last week on "Larry King Live," Bob Woodward revealed that her homosexuality was a central factor in Dick Cheney's decision not to run for president in 1996. If Mary Cheney's lesbianism is not a matter of public fact, then nothing is.

Unfortunately, this doesn't seem to have occurred to her parents. Lynne Cheney, for her part, went so far as to deny her daughter's lesbianism entirely. "Mary has never declared such a thing," Lynne Cheney told Roberts on "This Week." "I would like to say that I'm appalled at the media interest in one of my daughters. I have two wonderful daughters. I love them very much. They are bright; they are hard-working; they are decent. And I simply am not going to talk about their personal lives. And I'm surprised, Cokie, that even you would want to bring it up on this program." Thus, in one of her first public interviews as a potential second lady, Lynne Cheney said two things that are blatantly untrue. The first is that her daughter has never declared her lesbianism. The second is that Lynne Cheney doesn't talk about the private lives of her daughters. In fact, in almost every profile of Lynne Cheney last week, we were informed that she loves spending time with her two granddaughters, the children of her older daughter, Liz. Why is one daughter's heterosexuality a public matter while the other's homosexuality is not?

THERE ARE TWO possible answers to that question, and they shed more light on "compassionate conservatism" than all the klieg lights in Philadelphia. The first is that Dick and Lynne Cheney are genuinely embarrassed by and conflicted about their daughter's lesbianism. But, if this is the case, the Cheneys owe us an explanation. It may not be easy, but, when you enter public life at this level, matters that might have remained common knowledge but have rarely been discussed suddenly demand a response on a national stage. Arizona Senator John McCain had to talk about his divorce and his adopted children. Bush had to talk about his drinking and never stops talking about his faith. When they affect public officials, private matters that have a direct relationship to public concerns are routinely aired. In periods when profound social issues are being debated, this is even truer. At some point in this campaign, Dick Cheney will surely be asked about his views on homosexual equality. It's one of the few issues on which there are real differences between his party and his opponent's. He would have to be a Vulcan—or someone deeply ashamed of his own offspring—not to refer to his own daughter in responding. In a candidate putatively wedded to "compassionate conservatism,"

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one might even hope for more—for a response that adds a human dimension to the inhuman way in which gay people's lives are routinely discussed and caricatured.

There is, however, a second possibility—that the Cheneys don't disapprove of their daughter's lesbianism at all but, for political reasons, must pretend to. After all, Jerry Falwell, one of Bush's key allies on the Christian right, has already described Cheney's daughter as "errant." The Republican platform expresses its opposition to special "rights" for homosexuals. Cheney comes from Wyoming, the state where Matthew Shepard was murdered, and had to represent his constituents in the 1980s. Perhaps he feels obliged not to break publicly with the homophobes who still dominate his party. One small piece of evidence to support this theory is the absence from both Dick Cheney's and Lynne Cheney's records of any known anti-gay slurs, despite their being surrounded by people who bait homosexuals on a regular basis. By all accounts, Cheney has treated his gay staffers decently and was deeply supportive of his Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams during his "outing" ordeal. There is no reason to doubt his affection for his gay daughter.

BUT, IN SOME respects, this scenario is the more damning one. For, if Cheney personally respects gay people but supports policies that segregate and ostracize them for his own personal advancement, then he truly is contemptible. It's surely worse to oppose homosexual equality for opportunistic rather than for principled reasons. At least Pat Robertson seems to believe he is trying to save gay people from eternal damnation; but to support their continued stigmatization for the sake of a bucket of warm spit is morally pitiful.

Perhaps Cheney, like the rest of us, has grown on this subject over the years. Perhaps he now regrets his small part in making the AIDS epidemic even worse than it might otherwise have been and in casting a vote that declared that violence against gay people was not even worth recording. Perhaps his experience in overseeing the military's persecution of gay servicemembers has led him to have greater sympathy for their plight. (To his credit, he reversed the policy by which the Pentagon once sought to recoup scholarship money from gay soldiers the military had expelled.) Perhaps he has come to believe from observing his own daughter that gay relationships are not merely dysfunctional sexual compulsions akin to kleptomania (as Trent Lott holds) but human achievements of love and commitment. Perhaps he now sees that gay men and women, far from being threats to the traditional family, have always been at its heart.

But, if his views on these matters have evolved, he must say so now. And, if he doesn't, if he remains as silent as he has been, then he should not cavil at the inference that he is proud of his record and sees no problem with a Republican platform that continues to relegate his daughter to second-class citizenship. One can make some excuses for expediency in any political life. But at a certain point expediency becomes hypocrisy. And, when expediency means the civil and legal punishment of one's own child, it is, in fact, worse than hypocrisy. It is betrayal. ■

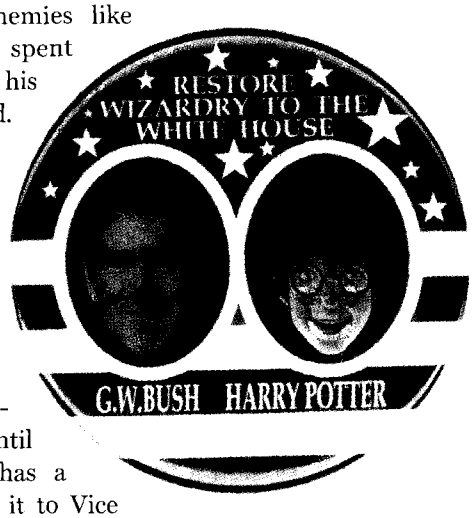
Convention Dispatch

Brotherly Love

By FRANKLIN FOER

JAMES HOFFA IS about to work his way across the Philadelphia Marriott's Liberty Ballroom, back to the platter of shrimp that has been laid out in his honor. As he turns, though, he encounters a familiar figure. Extending his fleshy fingers, he begins to vigorously pump Representative Bob Barr's hand. The Teamsters chief puts his arm around the rabid Republican—a man who has happily supported right-to-work legislation and voted against minimum-wage hikes—and smiles for the cameras.

It's not terribly surprising to see Hoffa mugging with a right-winger like Barr. After all, Hoffa prides himself on being an ultra-pragmatist willing to do business with anyone, from raving anarchists to raving nationalists. He even forgives old enemies like Ralph Nader, who spent decades trying to run his union into the ground. ("Ralph's a visionary," Hoffa now tells me.) And, although Hoffa will journey to Los Angeles for the Democratic convention later this month and won't announce the Teamsters' presidential endorsement until Labor Day, nobody has a better reason to stick it to Vice President Al Gore and his boosters in the AFL-CIO. It was Gore and his labor allies, after all, who tacitly endorsed Ron Carey, Hoffa's opponent in two union elections; the Democratic National Committee even helped raise money for Carey. Hoffa clearly has his reasons for making nice with Barr.



But it is harder to explain why a devout free-marketeer like Barr would kiss the ring of a labor boss. And Barr's not alone. While much has been made of the GOP's efforts to reinvent itself in Philadelphia as the party of vacuous multiculturalism, the Republicans have mounted a quiet, less-noticed campaign to steal away another Democratic constituency: labor. It's not the first time—in the '80s, Ronald Reagan exploited the rank and file's discontent with McGovernite liberalism to win two Teamsters endorsements. But that was an ideological marriage. Today, Republicans and Teamsters disagree on trade, health care, and almost everything else. This election, the Republicans are aggressively wooing Hoffa for only one reason: They're just as Machiavellian as he is.

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Republicans haven't feted a labor leader at a national convention in 20 years, and some of them are clearly out of practice. As Hoffa enters the hotel ballroom—where, on the convention's first night, the Republican National Committee is hosting a celebration in his honor—Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum greets him. But Santorum doesn't quite know how to make the pitch. "You know we're the party of the working man now," he boasts to Hoffa, before launching into a spiel about tax cuts. It's an awkward moment—the usually smooth senator's sentences trail off as his error slowly dawns on him—but Hoffa's smile never breaks. And Santorum soon cuts his speech short, pats Hoffa on the arm, and seizes a lifeline. "Have you met Senator Specter?"

Others at the soiree, however, find it easier to suck up with a straight face. Representative Henry Hyde tells reporters that the union boss is "a great proponent of good government. An honorable man. A real hero." Senator Orrin Hatch embraces Hoffa's squat frame and stares meaningfully into his eyes: "You're doing a terrific job. Keep it up. It's just great." Republican Party Chairman Jim Nicholson asks Hoffa to pose for a snapshot with his sister, then arranges a tableau of Hoffa surrounded by seven congressmen and four senators—a nice photo-op. (Later, Nicholson even lets Hoffa ride in the chairman's motorcade from the hotel to the convention hall.) In a speech to the audience, which teems with Teamsters and reporters and Republican officials, Nicholson's flattery grows increasingly, almost perversely, implausible. Hoffa, Nicholson says, "brought honor and decency to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters," just as George W. Bush will bring honor and decency to the Oval Office.

The labor boss takes it all in with a smile. "I didn't know I had so many Republican friends," he tells the crowd. And, for a while at least, the rapprochement looks almost genuine. After all, Hoffa truly does have reason to hate the Clinton administration. And his members really are more socially conservative than the public-sector unionists who dominate John Sweeney's AFL-CIO. What's more, Hoffa seems impervious to the one thing that makes his alliance with the Republican Party most bizarre: class. As he hurries through the halls of the First Union Center, Hoffa passes a cigar bar set up to entertain corporate donors—and he's not in the least perturbed. "That's how the world runs," he later explains matter-of-factly. "That's how business is done in America. The Democrat convention will be the same." With his blue double-breasted suit, French-collar shirt, and tasseled loafers, he looks as if he could stroll in, light up a stogie, and cut a deal.

Except Hoffa's suit is too short and at least a decade out of style; there are globes of sweat on his shirt. And, as he sees a blown-up cover of *Business Week* hyping "The Politics of Prosperity," Hoffa finally starts to show some discomfort with his new surroundings. "Give me a break," he says, gesturing as if to push the sign over. But then he regains his composure, forces a smile, and heads for his next meeting with his new friends in the GOP. ■

Convention Dispatch

Suite Talk

By Ryan Lizza

It's Sunday morning, about 24 hours before the start of the GOP convention, and State Senator Glenn Steil and the rest of the Michigan delegation are gathered at a DaimlerChrysler-sponsored brunch to honor Senator Spencer Abraham. As Steil and his fellow delegates gobble up runny scrambled eggs and soggy French toast, Michigan's elected officials make the rounds. Abraham goes from table to table shaking excited delegates' hands. A crowd gathers around Governor John Engler. But the brunch is merely a warm-up for the real excitement: a pool party, sponsored by Captain Morgan Rum, at the Holiday Inn on the outskirts of the city, where the delegation is staying. There, children swim in a small pool, while a man dressed in pirate garb (Captain Morgan) wanders around with two scantily clad "rum wenches" who pose for pictures with the delegates.

Steil, however, isn't at the poolside bash. He's broken off from the delegation and returned to his hotel—not the Holiday Inn but the Four Seasons. There, after freshening up, Steil attends a hospitality-suite reception for George W. Bush's National Finance Committee. Steil, you see, is no ordinary delegate. An office-furniture magnate from Grand Rapids, he is, in the parlance of the Bush campaign, a "pioneer"—one of 212 individuals who have each raised at least $100,000 for Bush and whose funds account for about 25 percent of the campaign's $90 million war chest. Steil says he pulled together the $100,000 in less than three months. "It's just like sales," he explains, "and he's an easy sell." Asked about his delegate duties, Steil becomes considerably less animated. "We look at the platform," he tells me vaguely. "There's only one controversial thing in there. I think it's something to do with education."

And why should he care? After all, it's not his selection as a delegate that got him invited to the soiree at the Four Seasons or singled out for praise by Engler at breakfast. Steil hasn't been at the convention long, but he's been here long enough to figure out that what matters in Philadelphia is what matters in American politics generally. And it's not the ability to lard yourself up with campaign buttons, join your delegation on the convention floor, and scream at the top of your lungs that the "great state of Michigan casts its 58 votes for the next president of the United States."

Gregory Slayton is figuring it out, too. On Tuesday, the Internet CEO and co-chair of Bush's Silicon Valley fundraising operation is heading toward the lavish suites and skyboxes encircling the First Union Center. Although Slayton is a political newcomer, he's established himself as a kind of *über*-pioneer. He's helped Bush outraise noted techie Al Gore three to one in the valley, and, Slayton boasts, "I've filled ten times over my pioneer quota." Indeed, at a meeting in Austin

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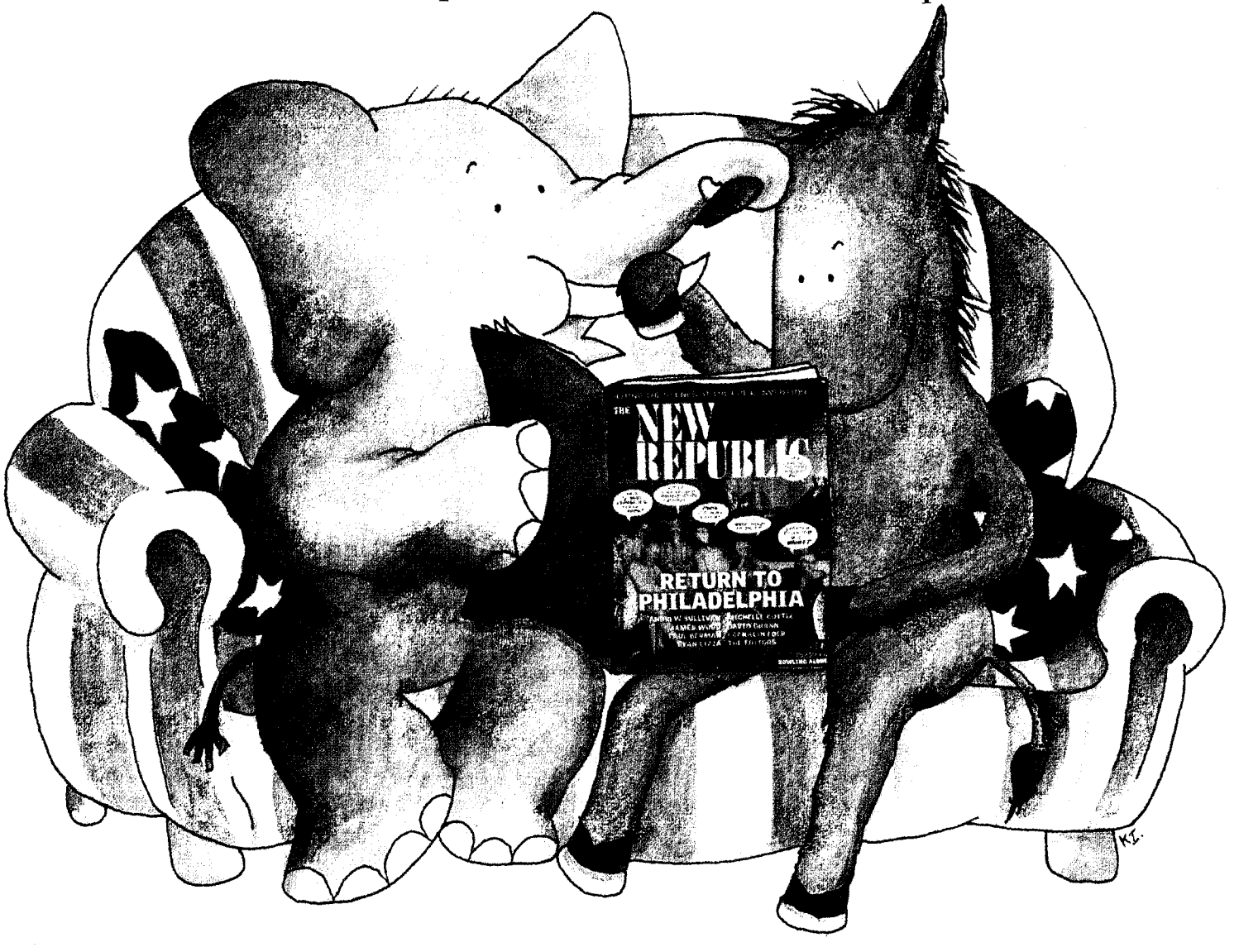

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for the campaign's high-tech backers a week before the convention, Bush expressed his gratitude by rushing over to Slayton and enveloping him in a bear hug.

Dressed in a dark three-button suit, dark tie, dark shirt, and bright white SILICON VALLEY BUSH 2000 baseball cap, Slayton walks into the arena in the late afternoon and is promptly greeted by a man named Bill Rice. Rice, a representative of the Bush campaign, has been assigned to escort Slayton, who has never before attended a Republican convention, around the hall. "How much fun is this?" Slayton asks as Rice begins showing him around. "This is better than running your own company."

Rice takes Slayton on a private tour of the convention floor, which is mostly empty, since it's still an hour and a half until prime time, when the delegates will take their places. But after five minutes on the floor Slayton has seen enough. He eventually makes his way to the hospitality suites, located in the mezzanine.

The first suite Slayton visits belongs to Bush's chief strategist, Karl Rove. Although the pudgy campaign mastermind isn't in attendance, his suite boasts plenty of food, a well-stocked marble bar in the center of the room, and the best seats in the arena for watching the convention. But no one in the hospitality suites seems very interested in what is happening onstage. "Man, nobody listens to the speakers!" Slayton observes at one point. One of the televisions is actually tuned to "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire."

Then Slayton heads next door to the National Finance Committee's suite, where the conversation turns to how awful it is to be on the convention floor. One woman laments that her husband is trapped there as a delegate. Bill Coleman, CEO of a software company called BEA Systems and a Bush finance committee member, is sympathetic. "Being a delegate distracts you from really getting into the convention," he says gently.

Slayton leaves the finance suite and makes his way through the back hallways of the arena. He's treated like a celebrity, constantly being stopped and introduced to politicians. A man who Slayton later tells me is "a big-time Washington lobbyist" introduces Slayton to a senator—whom Slayton later confesses he didn't recognize—as the person who "has raised more money for W. in California than just about anyone." Later, up in the GOPAC skybox, Slayton has a long, private conversation with California Representative David Dreier. Meanwhile, down on the floor, the roll is being called, and floor leaders from each state delegation cast their votes for Bush. No one in the room is paying any attention.

As Slayton leaves the GOPAC skybox to head back to the finance committee's suite, he turns to me. "You know what?" he says, as if gripped by a sudden realization. "It's obvious looking at all this that what happens on the floor is really meaningless." He's catching on. ■

Convention Dispatch

Minority Party

By DAVID GRANN

THE MAKING OF a black Republican superstar begins on the eve of the GOP convention, when the sedan pulls up to the hotel, picks up the man and his family, and whisks them off to the convention site, the driver barking into his CB: "Omega twelve, we have Paul Harris and his guests. Repeat: We have Paul Harris." As the car stops at the gate, two men search under the engine while a dog sniffs the trunk. Once inside the perimeter, the sedan pulls up in front of a second phalanx of security; a guard opens the door and Paul Clinton Harris steps out into the afternoon light.

The 36-year-old Virginia legislator has on khaki slacks and a white-and-blue checkered shirt. His hair is cut close to his head, a remnant of his days in the military, and, at a distance, he still resembles a cadet, his back straight, his shoes spit-polished. He is only in his second two-year term as a state representative, an obscure legislator known, if at all, as the person who holds Thomas Jefferson's old seat and as the only black Republican in the Virginia General Assembly. He has spoken mostly, as he puts it, to the Greene County pig roast, and he has never even attended a national convention. But, in its effort to transform the GOP's image—to create, as Democratic critics call it, "the illusion of inclusion"—the Bush campaign bypassed scores of better-known politicians, choosing Harris to open the first night of the convention and become the first face most Americans see on television.

"Are you Paul Harris?" a woman with a clipboard asks expectantly.

Harris nods. As he tries to introduce himself and his wife, he is suddenly swept into the bowels of the building, past secret-service agents and a row of cubicles that say, in succession, SPEECH DEVELOPMENT and POLICY DEVELOPMENT and POLICY/SPEECH COORDINATOR, until finally he turns into a small fluorescent-lit room marked PARTICIPANTS LOUNGE. Harris blinks his eyes and looks around. His wife, Monica, inspects the trays of snacks—asparagus and diced fruit and chocolate-chip cookies—arranged on a small wooden table. A bespectacled gentleman is sitting across the room, and Harris leans over and eagerly shakes his hand. "Senator. Paul Harris."

The man stares for a second, as if trying to place him, then says, "Hi, Paul. Senator Mitch McConnell."

Soon Harris is greeted by his "locator," who says she is going to find his "speechwriter," and then by his "scheduler," who says she is going to find his "speechwriter/coordinator." Finally, a tall woman with white stockings and a lilting Southern accent appears. She is Monty the Speechwriter. "What final edits do you have?" she asks.

Harris had written the original speech himself, then sent it off to the convention committee, which apparently sent it to

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the Bush campaign in Austin. "I haven't even seen the final version," says Harris.

"Things are still changing," she says. "There are so many layers of review. It will probably be changing up until the last minute."

Harris, who has never before used a speechwriter, reads through the latest draft, making several notations. "What are you changing?" she asks.

" 'Home of a black child,' " he says. "I think I should just say 'home of a child.' It's self-evident."

"At some point it will become clear," the speechwriter agrees with a smile, making the change on her copy. "OK. What else? Do you feel comfortable with everything?"

"Just one thing," he says. "I never asked—who recommended me to speak?"

She pauses. She thinks it was one of the governors, she says, then disappears.

An hour later Harris is brought to Rehearsal Room Number Three. Unlike the cubicles, it has a door, which is shut tightly after he enters. "Hi, I'm Jane Alter," a wiry woman with blond hair says. "I'm the speech coach. Are you the speaking guest?"

Harris nods, trying to take everything in. At one end of the tiny room is a podium with two teleprompters. A camera is focused on it, transmitting the image onto a giant television in the middle of the room. Beside the television a second woman holds a yellow stopwatch. "I'm your official timer," she says. At the other end of the room, next to the speechwriter, a fourth woman sits in front of a computer, typing Harris's speech into the teleprompter. Finally, standing by the door is a man who seems to have no particular role other than to watch everyone else. "See. That's how those teleprompters work," Harris whispers to his wife excitedly.

"OK," the speech coach says. "You're going to be speaking to 20,000 people just in the convention center, but the idea is to think you're speaking to three people—that's the best way to make it intimate." She directs him where to look and point. "Are there any changes in the speech?"

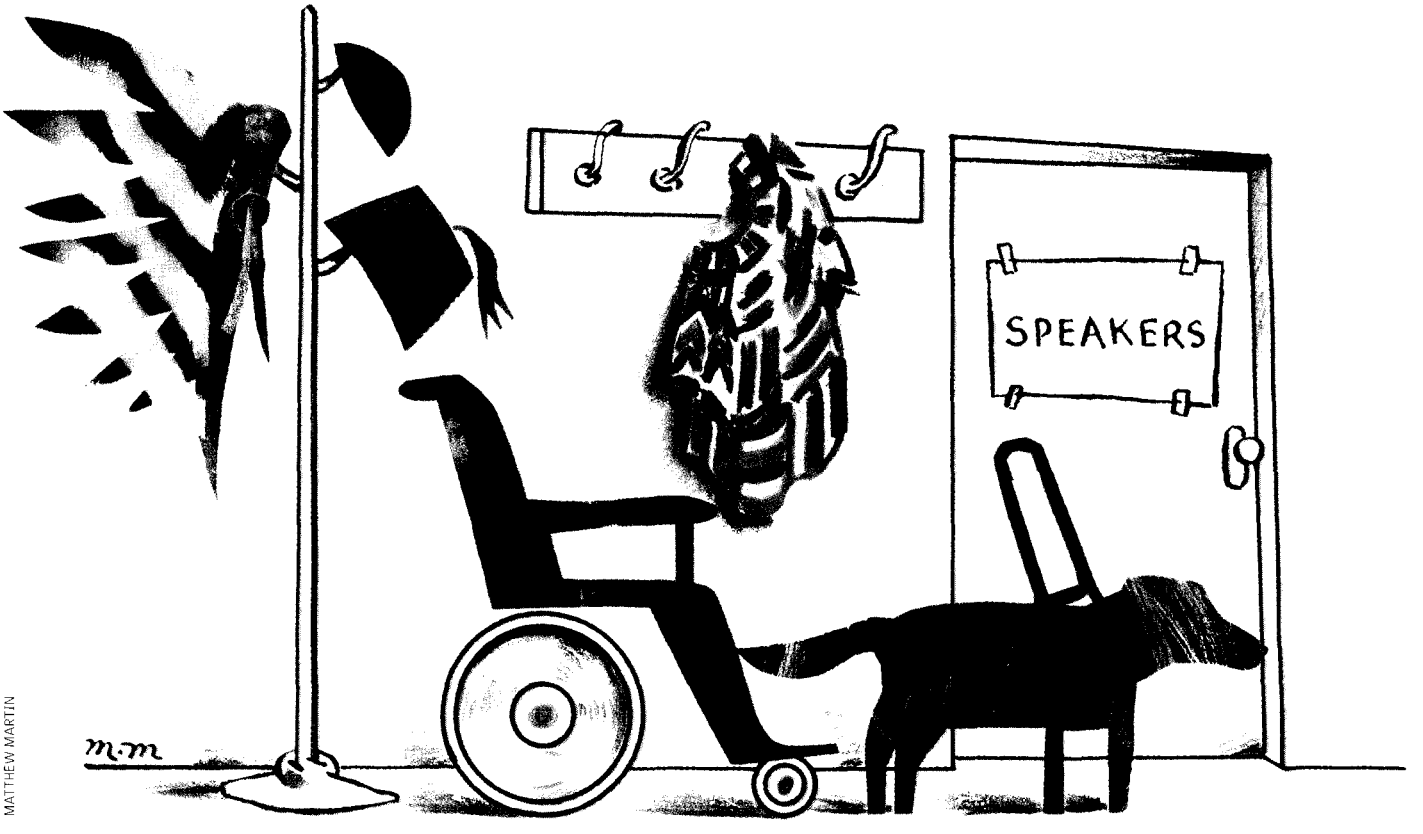
"We're dropping 'black child,' " says the speechwriter.

"OK, let's run through it once," says the speech coach. "You have a handsome face and a beautiful smile. So make sure you use it."

Harris looks over at his wife, then stares into the camera. Slowly he starts to read the words on the teleprompter: "I'd like to tell you about ... a child who was born ... to a poor teenage mother with a high school education in the segregated South ... His father was not around ..." As Harris speaks, the speech coach scribbles furiously on her pad. When he finishes, she says, "You have a beautiful voice. A beautiful story. Just a few things." She tells him not to squeeze the podium and to emphasize the important lines, like *Race and skin color do not matter* and *We need a president who will lead the effort to end the destructive habit of categorizing our children throughout America according to the color of their skin.* "This time we'll tape it and time it," she says.

Harris starts to read again. His hands let go of the podium and the words flow almost effortlessly. "You have a gift," the speech coach says. "You really do."

Before being ushered outside, Harris is led through the greenroom, where he'll get made up, and the red room,



MATTHEW MARTIN

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where he'll wait for his introductions, then upstairs, into the convention center, and onto the stage, the lights suddenly flashing in his eyes. For an instant Harris looks out at the empty seats and raises his hand, as if gesturing to the crowd. "I'm waving to Bernie Shaw and Peter Jennings," he says to his wife.

EARLY THE NEXT morning I ride with Harris over to the convention center, where he is already scheduled to do several interviews. He has on a new Italian suit with a white handkerchief tucked in the pocket and smells slightly of Ralph Lauren cologne. On the way I ask him about his upbringing. "I never knew my father when I was little," he says. "He lived in Charlottesville. He was a short-order cook, and once in a while we'd pass each other in the street."

His mother, who had just graduated from high school when he was born, raised him and his stepbrother and stepsister, whose father had also vanished. To support them his mother worked three jobs: first as a nurse on the 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift; then, after coming home and getting her children off to school, as a cook for one of the fraternities at the University of Virginia (she'd bring the leftovers home for dinner); and finally, on the weekends, as a home nurse. His views were shaped by watching her. "She would never let herself go on welfare," he says, "or let us think of ourselves as victims."

A track star and academic standout, Harris got an ROTC scholarship to Hampton University, a historically all-black college in Virginia. There he grew entranced with the military and with Ronald Reagan. During one of his political-science classes, when he began to speak about his emerging beliefs, the teacher said all that stuff had a name: Republicanism. "At first I was put off," he says. "Republicans were supposed to have four tongues and horns coming out of their heads."

But, after four years in the military and three years in law school, he ran for the Virginia General Assembly as a true believer—a tax-cutting, pro-life, anti-affirmative-action Reaganite. Old friends called him an Uncle Tom. Even his wife, a longtime Democrat who voted for Washington Mayor Marion Barry, had trouble adjusting to her husband's views. "If you're a black Republican, you better have a thick skin," Harris says.

When we arrive at the convention center, where Harris is one of only 85 black delegates, I can see why. Reporters, mostly white and mostly liberal, surround him, asking questions, as he puts it, that "no other politician would get asked." Why is he a Republican? Why is he here? In all the exchanges there is a racial subtext. When Harris tells one reporter he hopes to bring new people into the party, "adding cream to the coffee," the reporter replies, "Or coffee to the cream." Later, when I ask some nearby African American police officers and stagehands about black conservatives like Harris, they call them, in no particular order, "window dressing," "toadies," "turncoats," and "sellouts." There is a certain "loneliness and isolation" in being a black Republican, says Harris. You never perfectly fit in on either side.

When another white reporter—in this case, me—asks him whether he isn't the recipient of a new kind of affirmative action, in which Republicans fête politicians for their race even as they call for color-blindness, he seethes with anger. "I wouldn't be in the spotlight if I didn't learn very early on the importance of a work ethic," he says. "I wouldn't be in the spotlight if I wasn't grounded in a strong faith in God. I wouldn't be in the spotlight if I accepted this victims' mentality and engaged in destructive behavior.... God forbid a black person should claim credit for his own success."

THEY COME FOR him just before 7 p.m. and lead him into the makeup room. On CNN Bernie Shaw flashes on the screen. "This is going to be a long and interesting night.... The first [speaker] will be Paul Clinton Harris. Born in poverty, he now holds the Virginia General Assembly seat once occupied by Thomas Jefferson."

When Harris finally walks onto the stage, he lifts his hand and waves at the thousands of people milling about. "Thank you," he says, staring into the haze rising from all the lights. "Thomas Jefferson and I share a home in the Virginia piedmont. It's a land graced with God's beauty and graced with his legacy. Tonight I'd like to tell you about a child who was born to a poor teenage mother with a high school education in the segregated South." He speaks fluidly, pausing at each important line and staring into the camera. When he descends from the stage onto the floor five minutes later, the press and delegates mob him. "You made us so proud," someone yells. "President in 2020," cries another.

"I wanted to stay up there," he says, searching for his wife.

"What did it look like?" asks a reporter.

"Like a million cameras staring at me in the face."

He shakes hands and pauses for photographs. When I ask him about his future in politics, the excitement of the moment spills out. "I don't see any limit. I'll go as high as God intends me to." At one point, Pat Harrison, co-chair of the Republican National Committee, passes him backstage and says, "You're a superstar."

The next morning, when I wake up, Harris is already being interviewed on CNN. When I try to get in touch with him, he's no longer available. He is meeting, I'm told, with senators and fund-raisers. "He's probably being interviewed by Tim Russert," jokes one friend.

But that night, when I finally find Harris in the convention hall, he is sitting with his wife, almost anonymous among the Virginia delegation. There are no throngs of press or delegates rushing to his side. "Things have calmed down," he says. I can't tell whether he is dejected or not. But on the stage the convention is showing a more familiar image. One by one the old guard returns: Barbara Bush, John McCain, Norman Schwarzkopf, Bob and Elizabeth Dole. Their faces beam down from the huge screens. While Harris looks on quietly, Bob Dole makes a warm remark about Senator Strom Thurmond, the ancient segregationist. A few feet away, a delegate from South Carolina breaks from the "talking points" and, in response to a reporter's question, defends the Confederate flag. As I climb up the stairs toward the exit, I can still see Harris sitting there. But as I climb higher he gets smaller and smaller, until he vanishes into a sea of white. ■

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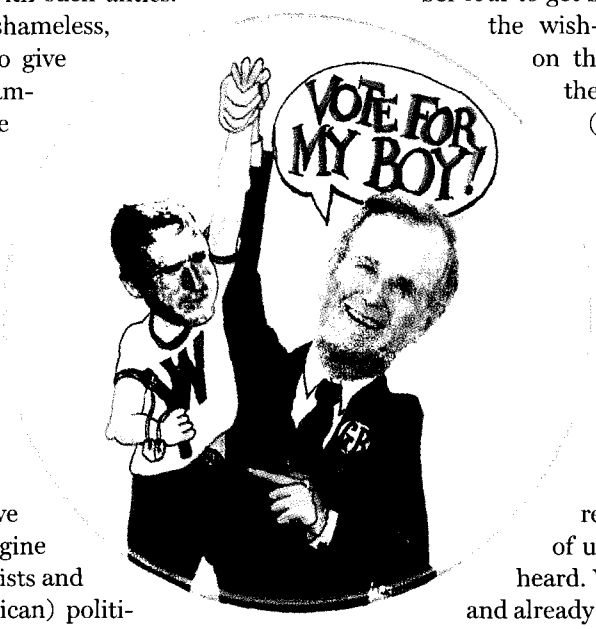
Convention Journal

Philadelphia Story

By MICHELLE COTTLE

SATURDAY, JULY 29, 10:20 A.M., ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

THE BUSES WON'T leave for more than an hour, but three dozen journalists are already milling about the parking lot of the Ritz-Carlton at the Pentagon City mall, just outside Washington, D.C. We're here for the McCain 2000 reunion tour. For one day only, the Straight Talk Express is being hauled out of retirement to transport the Arizona senator and erstwhile presidential candidate, along with a sizable entourage, to the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia. The Bush camp is said to be unhappy that John McCain is stealing W.'s thunder with such antics. And it has a point. The trip is a shameless, pointless publicity stunt geared to give McCain's nostalgic, now-defunct campaign staff a final wallow in the spotlight. Naturally, some 70 journalists have signed up, necessitating the chartering of three additional buses.



Many of the journalists and McCainiacs haven't seen one another since the primaries. Members of the no-longer-a-campaign staff are wandering around the parking lot, soaking up the back slaps and "how ya been"s. It's exactly how conservative conspiracy theorists must imagine what happens when liberal journalists and liberal (or at least liberal Republican) politicians get together. Senior strategist John Weaver (looking characteristically tall and gloomy) is shooting the bull with George Stephanopoulos (looking characteristically short and self-important). Media guru Mike Murphy, decked out in his "I'm too cool to care about this sort of thing" Tommy Bahama sports shirt, swaps knowing asides with a half-dozen press folk. Adding to the highly "meta," highly self-referential nature of the event, "Nightline" has sent a camera crew to report on the press corps reporting on the senator, who is simulating being a candidate. The morning grows increasingly warm and sticky; by the time McCain and wife Cindy (looking characteristically fetching in a smart blue suit) show up, around 11:20, I've started hallucinating from the bus fumes.

It is only 140 miles from Washington to Philadelphia. But today's trip is expected to take no less than six hours—largely because every 45 minutes or so the caravan will make a pit stop and cycle a group of roughly 15 members of the press onto the Straight Talk. Each journalist has been issued large, laminated Straight Talk credentials with a brightly colored dot on the back, indicating which leg of the trip he or she will spend on the senator's bus. My dot is red; I will be last. For the remainder of the six-plus hours, reporters are consigned to the three charter buses and expected to entertain themselves. This, as a general rule, is a mistake, as media folk tend to be more hyperactive, less patient, and more prone to mischief than the average fourth-grader. It takes less than an hour for those of us on bus number four to get bored enough to start crank-calling the wish-we-were-still-a-campaign staffers on the Straight Talk. A reporter from the *Los Angeles Times* rings Weaver (who reports that Cindy McCain is sharing a tuna fish sandwich with Representative Lindsey Graham), a reporter from *The Boston Globe* reaches press guru Todd Harris, and I call Murphy to complain that the bus driver won't start the in-ride movie she promised (*My Best Friend's Wedding*). The reception is bad and the noise level on the Straight Talk has apparently reached critical mass, requiring all of us to scream into our phones to be heard. We're not even as far as Baltimore, and already the bus driver hates us.

1:45 P.M., A REST AREA SOMEWHERE ON I-95

AT OUR SECOND pit stop, the didn't-we-make-a-great-campaign staff decides to switch the order and let the red dots have their turn on the Straight Talk. Soon Harris begins loading us in groups of three, somehow packing more than a dozen non-petite adults into what feels like nine square feet of space. As the group begins firing questions, it immediately becomes evident why the reporters have come: We want to hear McCain say something nasty about George W. Bush. After all, in the glory days of March, when we all rode the magic bus, McCain and Co. could usually be counted on to say what they really thought about their daddy's boy of a primary opponent. So, even before the caravan pulls back onto the highway, reporters are lobbing question after question about W., trying to hit just the right button to elicit some of that

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famous McCain bluntness: "Do you expect Bush to go negative—like he did in South Carolina—as the race tightens?" "Do you think Bush is a Pat Robertson Republican?" "Do you think his South Carolina campaign was pure opportunism?" "What does it say about him that, when the chips were down, he went after you so strongly?" "You often said you didn't need on-the-job training to be president, implying Bush did; do you think Cheney will give him that training?" "In the past, you criticized Bush's tax cut; will you campaign for his economic plan now?" No dice. Senator Straight Talk stays on message: George W. Bush and Dick Cheney are two of the finest, kindest, most honorable Americans he has ever known. Honest.

Many of my colleagues are disappointed. Such party-line babble was thought to be beneath McCain, who clearly does not have a lick of enthusiasm for Bush-Cheney. Indeed, the main reason journalists showed up for the Straight Talk epilogue was that it promised one last encounter with political sincerity before this week's ultrascripted convention. But the spirit of Philadelphia has apparently infected even the Arizona senator, and, in the name of (perfunctory) party unity—or perhaps with an eye toward self-preservation—he is choosing his words about the ticket slowly and carefully, with all the enthusiasm of a small boy forced to sit through his sister's ballet recital. After claiming disingenuously that the bus tour is simply meant to "enhance" the Bush campaign, McCain gets up to take a phone call. The disillusioned media pack snickers.

4:30 P.M., MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE GYMNASIUM, BLUE BELL, PENNSYLVANIA

AT THE FINAL stop on our bus odyssey, McCain speaks at a campaign rally for State Senator Stewart Greenleaf, who's running for Congress. More than one oh-to-be-a-campaign staffer notes that it is good (if a little bittersweet) to be back at a rally—even if the temperature inside the gymnasium is 400 degrees. But the gym is far from packed, and, while McCain delivers a variation on his old stump speech (quoting all the usual stats, like how many town-hall meetings he held in New Hampshire: 114), George W. is now shoehorned in as a champion of McCain's vision for the nation—which gives the talk a mildly stilted, cut-and-paste feel. In the spots where McCain used to trumpet his crusade to take back America for the little guy, he now inserts something about W.'s desire to, well, do whatever it is that he plans to do. When he finishes, McCain answers the usual round of nutty audience "questions"—the plight of veterans, the horror of goods made by foreigners, the unadulterated evil of the United Nations. Then, for the grand finale, the gym explodes in the massive, colorful, seemingly endless confetti blizzard that was McCain's signature on the primary trail. For a moment, it seems almost like old times.

SUNDAY, JULY 30, 10:50 A.M., PENNSYLVANIA CONVENTION CENTER, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

I AM DUE at the CNN greenroom for makeup in five minutes. Unfortunately, as a member of the convention staff patiently explains, said greenroom is some five miles away, at the First Union Center, where the convention is actually being held. If I hurry, I can hop on one of the complimentary shuttle buses ferrying people across town to the site. (From his tone, I get the feeling that I am the only person dumb enough to have assumed the convention was being held in the convention center.) As I dash for the bus stand and climb aboard, only one other person accompanies me, an editorial cartoonist from the *Los Angeles Times*. I'm not surprised. I'd been told that the *Times* sent about 70 people to Philadelphia for this week's event—which seems strange, since for weeks the entire press corps has been grousing that absolutely nothing of interest will take place. At last night's media reception, in fact, some 10,000 journalists wandered around one of the giant halls in the convention center (not the convention site, mind you) asking one another if they had run across any news or had any ideas for columns. Most reporters, it seemed, were just in town for the free booze.

As it turns out, getting to the convention site itself takes almost no time—my shuttle driver obviously having studied at the knee of Bobby Allison. Getting into the parking lot, however, is an entirely different matter, the modern-day equivalent of escaping from Alcatraz. There are secret-service searches, uniformed guards, and bomb-sniffing German shepherds. Something is amiss in the bus in front of us, and its passengers have been unloaded and shuffled off to the side while the vehicle is searched again—perhaps to make certain that none of the multiply pierced, heavily tattooed protesters around town have strapped themselves to the undercarriage.

I'm late in getting to CNN's skybox, but it's OK, because the other guest who is supposed to be on with me is still downtown (at the convention center, perhaps?) and cannot make it before airtime. No problem—the show is expected to last only a few minutes before it is interrupted by McCain's 11:30 a.m. speech at the Shadow Convention, which is taking place over on the west side of town. Sure enough, about halfway through the show, triumphal music blares and all heads swivel toward the monitors to watch the senator strut his stuff. The speech is beyond bad. It is awful, terrible—worse than Al Gore. McCain looks and sounds downcast and lethargic. He is going on about Americans committing themselves to something greater than their self-interest—and other lump-in-the-throat themes that played so well on the campaign trail—but he stumbles and flounders as though reading the words (or perhaps reading, period) for the first time. A couple of protesters start shrieking about an Indian-

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reservation issue they think he was on the wrong side of, and the senator threatens to leave the stage. Eventually Arianna Huffington has to sashay to the podium and ask the rowdies to hush up. When the whole ugly business is at last over, those on the scene later tell me, the senator leaves the hall in a huff. Yesterday's bus trip, it seems, was sadly prophetic. In his attempt at an epilogue, McCain has lost the very qualities that gave his campaign life in the first place. Somewhere, in the bowels of the convention site, the Bushies are silently cheering.

MONDAY, JULY 31, 9:30 A.M., TRAPPED ON A SHUTTLE BUS FULL OF TEXANS

"WHO WANTS PETER to sing the Texas fight song?" Dennis Boerner, an official and enthusiastic guest of the Texas delegation, hollers to the crowd. A roar goes up from the back of the bus, and a very flustered Peter (a Lone Star delegate), seated demurely behind me, turns a tender shade of red. Across the aisle, Kaycee Kendell (at age 18 the youngest member of the state delegation) bravely steps in as choirmaster but accidentally switches to the Aggie fight song—at which point the bus erupts in jeers, whistles, and threats to report her to the University of Texas alumni association.

On my way to the opening session of the convention, I have somehow wandered onto the shuttle bus carrying what seems to be the entire Texas delegation. The bus is awash in an ocean of hats and boots and clothing printed with the Texas state flag. Fortunately, Texans—like all Southerners—are friendly, chatty folk (unless you're a Yankee), and no one seems inclined to throw me under the wheels of the bus even after learning that I'm a member of the dreaded Liberal Media. (Just to be safe, however, I immediately lapse into my childhood drawl.) Soon I'm deep in conversation with Dennis's wife, Maggie, and a couple of other fabulous belles, all of whom are absolutely overwhelmed by the number of parties and tours and receptions on the agenda this week. Apparently, the key to the warm-and-smiley convention that Team Bush craves is to keep the delegates too stuffed, drunk, and/or exhausted to care what happens during the actual sessions. ("My head is splitting . . . all the wine," one delegate groans to me later as he hurries back to the Marriott for an afternoon nap.)

I get separated from the group as we shuffle through security but soon track Maggie down on the convention floor. Best seats in the house, naturally—dead center and right next to the stage. It pays to have your governor as the nominee. But it also requires considerable preparation and choreography on the part of the state Republican Party, since its convention reps are key figures in the increasingly important Dance of the Delegates. These days, delegates don't really play any substantive role at the conventions (as many readily admit), but they are vital extras in this week's TV pageantry. Given the Bush campaign's insistence that the convention be a love-in, appearances are everything, and the Lone Star delegation has to look particularly sharp and festive. To this end, the party has arranged for everyone to sport matching cowboy hats on the floor. "We've been asked to wear suits tonight and tomorrow," says delegate Bobby Dockens, "and Thursday we're all supposed to wear our flag shirts." The resulting Technicolor spectacle should make for a great clip on the evening news. But snappy dressing is only part of the story. Maggie tells me they also get "all these memos" about what time they need to be where or on which bus, etc., etc. It may look like a circus on television, but the whole thing is actually pretty structured. "They are always reminding us that we represent Texas and should behave ourselves," she confides with just a hint of exasperation. God forbid Dennis should goad the group into singing the Texas fight song on the convention floor during prime time.

Wondering if the vice presidential nominee's home delegation receives the same level of care and handling, I head off in search of the Wyoming folks. But, just as I do, the convention audience (what little of it there is at this pointless morning session) goes wild. Dick and Lynne Cheney are in the house. Desperate for footage, the approximately 1.2 million network cameramen on-site trample me as they jockey for a good shot of the Cheneys, who take seats directly opposite the main stage. Other cameras focus on what appears to be the Wyoming delegation, which is standing and cheering loudly. As the chaos subsides, I walk over and introduce myself to the guy standing just beneath the Wyoming sign. "Oh, I'm from Tennessee," he says with a chuckle. "They just told me to come over here to fill up the section." Pointing at a man to his left, he adds, "He's from Missouri. I don't know where they're all from." Finally, we locate an actual resident of Wyoming, Belenda Willson, who explains that most of her fellow Wyoming delegates had been shifted to the seats surrounding the Cheneys, so that *that* section would look full for the cameras. Poor Belenda was in the rest room when the move occurred and was thus left behind. But she seems cheered by the idea that the whole thing looked really great on television.

8:00 P.M., THE CONVENTION FLOOR

THE DIVERSITY PAGEANT has begun. Up on the stage, "a different kind of convention" is unfolding—i.e., one that could have been planned by Bill Clinton. It is a cavalcade of black and brown and female faces spinning stories of hardship and triumph through perseverance. There are schmaltzy video montages of dark-skinned children opining about poverty and educational opportunity. The delegates, for the most part, could not be less impressed. And who can blame them? They're white (almost 90 percent), male (65 percent), well-off (one in five is a millionaire, according to *The New York Times*), and substantially more conservative than average Republicans. What's taking place onstage has little to do with *their* Republican Party.

Abruptly, the two women standing in front of me begin freaking out. "If only I had my camera!" one of them shrieks to her friend. "Omigod, omigod, *omigod*. It's Newt!" The deposed father of the Republican Revolution is holding court at the rear of the convention floor. People are swarming around him, reaching out to touch the hem of his dark suit. I hurry to join them. "There are a whole lotta people who still love ya, Newt," gushes a good-old-boy delegate, giving the ex-speaker's shoulder a squeeze. There sure are. I find myself

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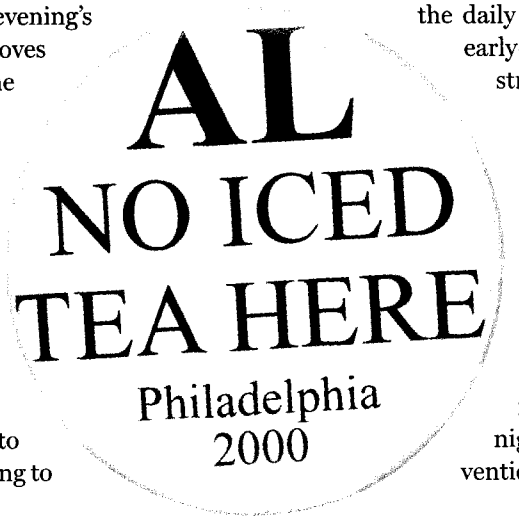
thrust before him by the crowd and wonder what one asks Gingrich at this point in his career. "How long are you around for?" I inquire, desperate. "I'll be here all week," he responds. "Really?" I follow up, apparently sounding incredulous. "Well, I *am* a commentator for Fox News covering the convention," he retorts.

I elbow my way through the throng and roam the floor for half an hour, returning to find that Gingrich has managed to move only about four feet. The media has discovered him and formed an impenetrable barrier, causing gridlock in this corner of the room. I am actually propelled backward as little old women battle for position with ruthless network cameramen. Gingrich was trying to make his way over to the Georgia delegation, his handler explains to me, waving toward the far side of the floor. Fat chance. Ten minutes later, having actually lost ground, Gingrich gives up and tries to retreat whence he came, adoring mob in tow.

You can hardly blame the crowd. This is, after all, the Republican convention. The delegates are still party faithful who pray nightly to God and the Gipper for salvation. There is the occasional clap or cheer for the rainbow-hued human-interest speakers, but most of the crowd seems unimpressed or at least unenthused. As speaker after speaker shares his or her "up from the bootstraps" personal history, delegates clamber onto chairs to snap photos of Poppy and Barbara. The low point comes when Elaine Chao, a former Bush administration official, rises to tell of her family's poignant flight from Taiwan to America. The rumble of voices on the convention floor threatens to drown her out, and when Chao offers a special hello to her home delegation of Kentucky, she barely receives a reply.

By contrast, the delegates go wild when House Speaker Dennis Hastert, the token white male politico of the evening—looking for all the world like Drew Carey in wire-rimmed frames—takes the stage and begins denouncing Democrats, with particular emphasis on House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt and, of course, President Clinton. It is the only time all evening that the happy, inclusive message degenerates into a partisan rant—and the conventioneers love it. They whoop and holler and wave their signs high. Hastert ain't Newt—but he's the only speaker willing to be really partisan, which the delegates feel they have a right to expect, *given that it's their party's convention.*

Perhaps nothing reveals the disconnect between stage and audience as much as the evening's closing act: Colin Powell. The party loves Powell, as does most of America. But the general's speech sounds as though it had just been faxed over from the White House. He talks of providing every child with quality health care, sings the praises of immigrants, and says political leaders must "ensure a diverse college population with the loss of affirmative action." By far his best line of the night, however, is his assertion that "children are a gift from God, not only to their parents, but to all of us. They belong to us all." In other words, "It takes a village." If I were a Republican delegate, I'd be clinging to Newt, too.



TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 9:45 A.M.

As I walk down 12th Street toward the shuttle buses, it suddenly hits me: If I see another grown man loping along with a giant, flapping elephant hat on his head, I am going to hurt someone. This, of course, means I cannot remain anywhere within a 20-block radius of the convention site. My hotel room is too frightening to spend one more second in than absolutely necessary, and it's far too early to convince anyone (other than maybe the Texas delegation) to go for drinks. Regrettably, my only option is to head over to West Philly and check out the much-derided Shadow Convention.

It is easy to see why Arianna Huffington's little get-together has elicited such snickering. Her ostensible purpose is to give voice to regular Americans—say, those without an extra $2 million to plop down for a pajama party in the Lincoln Bedroom. But the average Joe isn't much in evidence at the Shadow Convention; instead, the meeting site is overflowing with a colorful combination of nuts, freaks, kooks, and aging hippies who believe that Jello Biafra is the next Thomas Jefferson. "He says all the things I wish Nader would," a member of the New York Green Party raves about the former lead singer of the Dead Kennedys, Ralph Nader's vanquished Green Party opponent. As at any "alternative" political gathering, media members, in particular, are under constant assault by delusional, paranoid (the LaRouchies are here, for God's sake), and just plain pissed-off folk who don't care about the issues under discussion so much as they want to share their insanity with others. "It's the child-support laws in this country," explodes Rod Collins, an African American who is *extremely* angry about the government's strong-arm collection tactics. "They got themselves new niggers—deadbeat dads," he barks, equating child-support "witch hunts" with the Shadow Convention's topic du jour: the failed war on drugs. "It's a dimunition [*sic*] of our rights!"

Granted, Huffington is offering the assembled journalists more than just lunatics. Indeed, for all the Shadow Convention's outrage over how scripted the regular conventions have become, it too is a media-friendly affair. Not only has Huffington arranged for a passel of high-profile political and entertainment figures to take the stage, she front-loads the daily schedules, putting the big names on early—before the protesters take to the streets or the GOP show gets rolling—so the TV cameras can swoop in, get their footage of Jesse Jackson or Paul Wellstone, and swoop back out. McCain's Sunday address started at around 11:30 a.m., and today both Jackson and comedian Al Franken are scheduled to appear before lunch. Speeches are kept short and sweet, somewhere between five and 20 minutes. And, just like the GOP's nightly extravaganza, the Shadow Convention program features heart-wrenching

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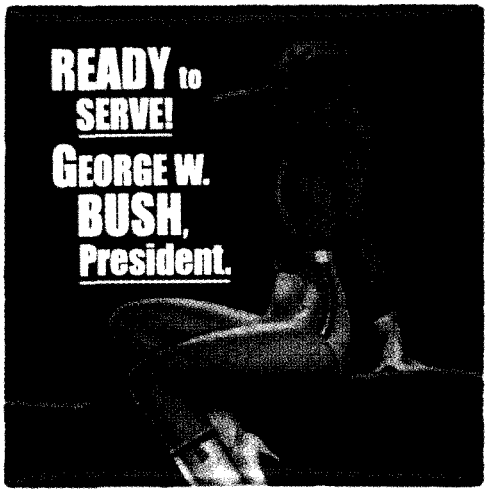
testimonials and video presentations and musical interludes. Just before Jackson takes the stage, a ragtag group of kids whose parents are in prison for nonviolent drug offenses sing and read poems to the audience, causing an outbreak of sniffles and tears. The production values, of course, aren't what they are over at First Union, and things almost never run like clockwork. (This morning, a large herd of people scheduled to appear are accidentally kept waiting out on the street for most of their allotted time.) But the reporters appreciate some controlled chaos—just as long as they can file their copy on time.



Sweetening the media deal, Huffington's celebrity status prompts other hip folks to drop in from time to time. Returning to the hall after lunch, I nearly collide with Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura, palling around in the street with Jackson. The Body, who has been inside schmoozing the crowd, charmingly asks his fellow Jesse for an autograph, then lumbers away to who-knows-where. Huffington, meanwhile, is doing an interview with Black Entertainment Television—and a half-dozen other news organizations. Say what you will about the old publicity whore, she gives good quote.

In the afternoon, sessions are geared more toward true believers than media cynics—more substantive, less star-studded. Flipping through today's agenda, I see we will be hearing from the founder and director of the November Coalition, "an organization of drug-war prisoners, their loved ones, and others who oppose America's unjust drug policies," as well as the director and founder of the ACLU's Drug Policy Litigation Project. There will also be documentary footage of drug raids filmed for French television and a lecture on "The Sorry State of American Asset Forfeiture Law." Feeling completely shallow and unforgivably callous, I leave the auditorium as quickly as possible.

Fortunately, Shadow organizers are offering an *alternative* alternative convention activity: urban-renewal tours. Fit only for the pathologically earnest and slightly masochistic, the renewal tours (running Monday through Wednesday in the afternoon) are essentially three-hour field trips to some of the area's most blighted neighborhoods, for the purpose of showcasing the community volunteer groups working to reclaim them—with the help of federal dollars, of course. Today's destination is Camden, New Jersey, a truly abysmal burg located just across the Delaware River from Philly. Oddly enough, many GOP conventioneers visited Camden earlier this week for an opening-night fireworks-and-laser display on the waterfront—the site of Camden's vaunted redevelopment. But there's no way in hell the RNC would let these folks get anywhere near the real Camden, which—from what our little tour group sees—is made up almost entirely of vacant lots, burned-out houses, and boarded-up storefronts. (Oh, yes, it also boasts a Superfund site and a medium-security prison.) The neighborhoods we drive through look hopelessly beaten down, with young men hanging out on street corners and old women slouched on their front stoops, smoking cigarettes and trying to stay cool. On a brighter note, the volunteers we meet point to visible (albeit gradual) improvements in the community and seem remarkably upbeat about their work. For the final half-hour, a dozen or so activists practically drown us with facts and figures and proposals and pending projects. Their presentations are substantive and authentic, a refreshing change from the week's main event. And, perhaps best of all, none of the activists is wearing a stupid, floppy-eared elephant hat.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2, 11:45 A.M., BACK WITH THE ELEPHANT HEADS.

UGH. I AM still suffering from a hangover from last night's convention session, which reached its bizarre climax when a McCain-shaped windup doll delivered what sounded more like a self-eulogy than an endorsement of W. ("I have such faith in you, my fellow Americans. And I am haunted by the vision of what will be." *There's* a closer that screams confidence in your candidate.)

But hope springs eternal—and not just because pop singer Jon Secada is on tonight's program. The W. posse has hit Philly (sparing us any more of those Big Brother-esque satellite drop-ins from along the trail), and a welcoming gala is about to get under way at the convention center. My press credentials get me through the wall of police officers, secret-service agents, and compulsive badge checkers positioned every four feet inside the building. But now four strapping young agents and a German shepherd have me off to one side of the ballroom, demanding to search my shoulder bag. "Please remove any electronics," one of them politely demands before stud number two brings his dog over to snuffle around in my personal effects. I can't be certain, but I think the pooch got away with a couple of breath mints and a stick of Juicy Fruit.

Although listed in the paper as a luncheon honoring Governor and Mrs. W., this intimate gathering of 3,100 has little to do with the nominee, who spends a total of about 15 minutes in the room. His sole purpose here is to flatter the audience, which is largely composed of big-money donors who, through tickets to this gala alone, have added another $10.1 million to the party coffers. W. tells the crowd how much he likes Cheney (great man, presidential decision, etc.), how much he loved Laura Bush's speech, how much he adores his family. In short, he says nothing at all. And the crowd eats it up. "The spirit is so different from 1996," a gregarious thirty-something woman confides to me. And, as if on cue, the Philadelphia Boys Choir belts out another song. ■

For additional dispatches by Michelle Cottle, about Wednesday night and Thursday at the Republican convention, visit THE NEW REPUBLIC ONLINE *at* www.tnr.com.

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

A Homeland

THE OTHER EVENING I heard an orchestral piece called *Atmosphères* by György Ligeti. It lives up to its name: it's a succession of moods, which seem to prepare for the entrance of a theme. But that theme never arrives. The composition exists through the validity of its moods, through its focus on material usually considered mere background.

This music is hardly a complete analogue with Abbas Kiarostami's style, but the next day, when I saw the Iranian master's latest film, it reminded me of Ligeti. **The Wind Will Carry Us** (New Yorker) is much more complex, if only because it runs two hours and *Atmosphères* takes seven or eight minutes, but Kiarostami, here even more than in previous films, concentrates on texture, on "atmosphere," not on theme—which in this case would be drama or narrative.

The nub of the picture is simple. An engineer, whose name and work are never specified, arrives in a remote Iranian village with his crew, whom we never see. They have come from Tehran to make some sort of record—never explained—of a funeral ritual that will be held for an old woman in the village who is dying. They all expect to be there only a few days, but the old woman, who also is never seen, lingers and in fact improves. In the two weeks of the film, the engineer, a city man, gets to know villagers of many kinds, from a schoolboy to some elders. Several times he reports via cell phone to a woman—in Tehran, I suppose—who is apparently his chief. In order for his phone to function, he has to drive to a nearby hilltop, and there he finds a man in a deep hole, digging a ditch. The ditchdigger converses with him whenever he is there; but we don't see that ditchdigger either. At the film's end the engineer's work, whatever it was, is uncompleted, yet this fact looks small against the large continuities we have glimpsed. The finish, quietly if somewhat neatly, confirms this view. Early in the picture an ancient human bone is unearthed: at the end the engineer tosses it into a stream. It is carried along.

Kiarostami is interviewed in *Film Comment* (July/August 2000). Interviews with directors are rubbery sources of insight about them, but Kiarostami is so clear, so fixed in his intent, that his remarks stick. He says that someone observed of his new film that it is about people who do not exist—the old woman and the ditchdigger, for instance. Kiarostami agrees:

> The movie does have a physical essence to it, but it also has a nonphysical or spiritual side. We don't see some characters, but we do feel them. This shows there is a possibility of being without being.

The idea of being without the usual warrants of being—this seemed to me Ligeti's principle, too. Obviously it is a dangerous one for an artist. The success of such a work depends to an unusual degree on the audience, which always collaborates in a performed work but here has greater responsibility. Kiarostami (like Ligeti) relies on us to fulfill his film. Certainly he must invite us; then, if we are engaged, we do our job—rewardingly. What Kiarostami gives us here is beautifully inviting, and the rewards await us.

The opening shot is of wide umber hills. (The key visual tone of the film, in Mahmoud Kalari's camera, is umber.) In the distance a modern van is snaking along a twisty road, but we hear the voices of the occupants up close, discussing landmarks that are to guide them to a small village. The contrast between the distant car and the close voices suggests another contrast: these men know one another but are newcomers to this region. At a turn in the road a boy is waiting, appointed by the village to direct them. He is an immediate hint of the cordiality to come.

In dramatic terms, very little happens thereafter—more candidly, in dramatic terms nothing happens. For the engineer, who is played with gentleness and response by Behzad Dourani, the most exciting event is his discovery one day that the unseen ditchdigger on the hilltop has been trapped underground. The engineer summons help. Otherwise, only a great many small things occur around him, as they have been occurring for centuries in this remote place. Sometimes an off-screen woman's voice greets the engineer with flourishing Iranian phrases: he replies, and we cut to a shot of the woman who has already passed, carrying an immense load of hay or firewood. Both the ornate language and the heavy burden are part of the texture of the life around him.

Here is an archetypal scene. The engineer goes to buy milk at a woman's house. She directs him to the dark cellar where her cow is kept. There in the darkness, with only a lantern's light, he meets her daughter, sixteen, who declines to show her face or tell him her name. The engineer sits and waits while she milks. While he waits in the dark, the engineer, in the mood of the place, recites a poem for the girl, a poem that contains the words of the film's title. When he finishes the poem and she finishes the milking, he takes the pail, pays, and leaves. The darkness, the cow in the cellar, the sound of the milking, create a fabric—of locality--interwoven with the sound of the poem.

Near the end, Kiarostami gives us a simple, huge sequence. Wheat fields ripple across the hills in the sun; then comes a nighttime shot of the village flecked with light; then comes a shot of the village at early dawn. This sequence is a film artist's way of articulating the word "time."

Dourani is, I gather, the only professional actor in the picture. Kiarostami, who has often worked with non-professionals, has developed his skills with them to the point where he can lead them to put themselves on film, sometimes in unexpected ways.

> On-the-spot creation of dialogue has been necessary because it's the only way I could work with people who are not professional actors, and some of the moments you see in my movies have surprised me.... I don't give dialogue to the actors, but once you explain the scene to them, they just start talking, beyond what I would have imagined.

This openness in Kiarostami, his eagerness for this kind of surprise, underscores a major truth. Comment about him deals often with his concepts of cinematic intent, but I have read little on what seems to me fundamental in him: love. He loves the Iranian people. He loves being Iranian—the customs, the relationships, the formalities, the patterns of work, the patience. His use of non-professionals splashes a people's verity throughout his films, especially this new one.

At one point he wryly nudges those who are unsympathetic to his deliberate pace. The engineer comes across a turtle

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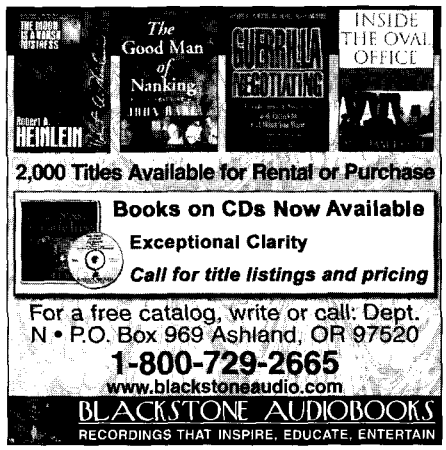
in his path, and, for no particular reason—perhaps just irked by its pace—he turns it on its back. He walks ahead. In a moment we return to the turtle. It struggles to its feet; then keeps on turtling.

Not many of us would want a steady diet of films conceived in Kiarostami's way, but then not many would want unvaried concerts of music like Ligeti's. Our expectations in art are socially nurtured, and our society—including our rural society—is far removed from Kiarostami's expectations. He understands this point; he says in that interview, "Many viewers may come out of the theater not satisfied, but they won't be able to forget the movie." His assumption is likely to prove true. *The Wind Will Carry Us* is a paradox: an adventure into the familiar—unforgettable because it combines a daring artistic vision with a reverential view of dailyness. ■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Jed Perl on Art
Ordinary Magic

IF THE GREAT artists are the ones who find the bedrock of the artistic imagination in the particulars, then Jean-Siméon Chardin could well be the greatest painter who ever lived. Of course there is no such thing as *the* greatest painter; but after only an hour at the Chardin retrospective that is currently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I am not really conscious that there is another painter whose work I want to look at. Chardin gives earth-shattering importance to the tiniest elements. There is something uncanny about the way that his mere nothings—a single cherry pit, or a group of three grapes (two green, one deep blue), or a smear of red reflection on the side of a clear drinking glass—stick in a viewer's mind. When artists get together and talk about Chardin's paintings, the conversations have a way of becoming deliriously intricate. I was not particularly surprised when, one day at the show, I saw a well-known painter pull a magnifying glass out of his pocket. Chardin's paintings have all the richness of private life, with its secret themes and its half-exposed connections. It is natural that we feel this urge to get closer to the work.

The Goncourt brothers, in their matchless essay about Chardin, speak of "a kind of dilated amplitude" that he gives to everything he paints. Certainly nowhere else in still life painting—not before Chardin and not after him—have objects had such a complex power. The earthenware pitchers that play a central role in many of his paintings of the 1720s and 1730s are so incisively drawn and so deftly situated that they seem to cut through space. Often placed with their handles facing us, these pitchers move off into a dramatic engagement with other objects. Their spouts are frequently turned away, like faces we cannot see. The handle, which is close to us, can have an eye-popping verisimilitude, a bulk and a glistening surface that is as action-packed as the muscular arm of an athlete. Chardin's anthropomorphizing of inanimate objects makes one think of the tea kettles with faces in children's books. Yet he wraps his dramatic *doubles entendres* in such elaborately naturalistic garb that we tend to register the transformations subliminally, through a re-doubled kind of curiosity that interestingly complicates our efforts to see the painting whole.

In *The Ray*, a very large still life that Chardin painted when he was 26 or 27, the earthenware pitcher all the way to the right has the sensuous vigor of a youthful warrior in a painting by Rubens. A few years later, in a number of smaller compositions, the pitchers with their handles facing us and their spouts pointed away suggest a more equivocal effect, a sneakier enchantment, somewhat reminiscent of those women in Watteau's paintings who refuse to show us their faces. These glazed pottery handles, with their superbly arranged highlights, ask to be grasped—and at the same time they underscore the so-near-and-yet-so-far mystery of Chardin's paintings, for the feeling that we can actually touch those handles runs straight up against the canvas's triumphant two-dimensionality, against a painterly logic that is so fascinatingly *un*like life. With Chardin, mime-

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sis becomes the juggling act of all time, as he tosses off a few brilliantly rough-and-ready brushstrokes, which construct an object that looks so delicately true that we think we might be able to hold it—a thought that immediately dissolves the pitcher or glass back into flying, helter-skelter dabs of red, white, blue, gray, brown, and green pigment.

Chardin presented *The Ray* to the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture on September 25, 1728, and immediately gained membership in that august body. This arresting, almost perfervid vision—with a dramatic flair that could only be the work of an excitable, youthful genius—holds center stage in the first room of the show at the Metropolitan, and it strikes me as being as finely orchestrated as any still life ever done. Chardin discovers a tremendous subject here. The gutted fish, which hangs on the stone wall, all pale white and blood-red, has a face whose eyes and mouth are as gargoyle-eerie as some of the tiny gremlins that Michelangelo carved on the mouldings of the Medici tombs. Around this central ghostly presence, the painting surges: a young man's sweeping dismissal of all who imagine that *nature* can be *morte*.

The painting is a geometer's madhouse, packed with vectors and triangulations and rotating circles. To the right, the handles of a knife, a pot, and a spoon bristle like swords and lances, leading us—crashing, sliding, whizzing—toward the ghastly fish. To the left, an arched-backed cat comes at us as vigorously as the pitcher at right moves away from us. Objects at either end of the composition are angled inward, so much so that they seem to penetrate the stone wall. And the fish is a still, wraithlike core—a black hole rendered in red and white. The painting is a vision of teeming, circulating energy, a clutter of pots, pans, leeks (or scallions), and oysters that has been harnessed into an intricate battle scene that is also an ordinary stone ledge in the kitchen of some elegant eighteenth-century Parisian home.

CHARDIN WAS BORN in Paris in 1699. (This retrospective celebrates his three-hundredth birthday, and has already been seen in Paris, London, and Düsseldorf.) His father was a cabinetmaker who built billiard tables for the king. The son passed most of his life in an area of the city around the church of St. Germain des Prés and the Louvre across the river: a pedestrian can cover the territory in an hour. Although Chardin did not paint the streets of Paris, there is something in his paintings—in their light-infused grays and deep violet undertones, and their odd combination of intensity and serenity—that captures the city's spirit. Chardin's first wife died young, and he married a second time. He had a son who embarked on a career as a painter, foundered, and died in Venice in 1772, probably a suicide. Chardin was immersed in the business of the Academy, acting for many years as its treasurer and supervising the hanging of the Salons. He saw his work achieve popularity and critical success; Diderot, the supreme critic of the age, admired his paintings enormously. By the time of Chardin's death in 1779, however, his intimate canvases were out of favor, overtaken by the rising fashion for a cooler, more classically oriented approach to painting.

AT THE METROPOLITAN, which in the past year or so seems to have achieved some kind of perfect pitch when it comes to installing exhibitions, the Chardins are arranged in six galleries with wall colors that work beautifully with the paintings—deep red, moss green, rich blue—and there is a good mixture of natural and artificial light that allows Chardin's colors to breathe. The exhibition includes sixty-six paintings; the retrospective is smaller than it was in Paris, and smaller than the extraordinary show that came to Cleveland and Boston in 1979, but it has a lovely shape. The size of the exhibit may even be a strength. This is a manageable experience. You quickly pick up on correspondences and echoes that might take longer to grasp in a bigger show.

The only unfortunate thing is that the Chardin retrospective will not stay longer. (It closes on September 3.) I would just as soon that it remain at the Metropolitan forever. No other painter has revealed so many sides of so restricted a compass of still life and genre subjects. Chardin never did anything else quite like *The Ray*, but then he had the kind of imaginative alertness that enables a painter to invent a staggering range of distinct compositional and metaphorical ideas. Even in his work with the figure—a subject to which some would say he was not naturally disposed—he pursues a considerable range of motifs and dramatic situations.

There are interiors, seldom more than a foot and a half high, in which the figures are enveloped by an atmosphere and take on a dreamlike clarity, as if they were adults who imagined their entire lives as passing in a dollhouse. Chardin also did larger figures, perhaps roughly half life-size. They are often seated at a table, engaged in an activity that involves contemplation or concentration: a boy builds a house of cards, a young man blows bubbles, an older man reads a book, a woman is having tea. And then, at the very end of his life, there are a few pastel portraits, including impressions of his wife and several of himself, in which Chardin finally zeroes in and shows how even a face with a relatively serene surface may be animated, and maybe even a little scrambled, by strong, deep emotions.

EACH DECISION THAT Chardin makes, whether it is about the glinting highlight on a glass of water or the way a silhouetted figure fits into a doorway, has a one-of-a-kind excitement. Sometimes, when we are confronted with several near-identical versions of a composition (which he did to satisfy the demands of his collectors), we may become almost overly sensitive to the tiniest shifts in brushwork or color. But the motive behind all this close looking is sound. By means of the slightest compositional adjustments, this artist knew how to define and to redefine extremes of informality and formality, and all the infinite gradations between those extremes.

Some of the small, late still lifes, with a few pieces of fruit and a glass or a goblet, take the idea of the "uncomposed" composition as far as it has ever gone; they are tightrope exercises in structural elimination. Yet near the end of his life Chardin also painted, in *The Attributes of the Arts and Their Rewards*, what may be the most completely satisfying elaborately plotted still life in the history of art. Here Chardin assembles a vast array of objects—books, portfolios, drafting instruments, paints, brushes and palette, medals, a statue of Mercury by the painter's friend Pigalle—to build a complicated multilevel structure that is so broadly conceived yet so minutely worked out that it recalls the grandest edifices constructed in France in the century before Chardin, such as Louis Le Vau's Institut de France and the façade of the Louvre, where Chardin had an apartment late in his life.

In Chardin's work, composition is not only a matter of how forms are arranged in relation to one another and to the canvas, but also a matter of how paint is laid on, of its density or translucency, of the size of the brushstroke in relation to the object represented and to the canvas as a whole. He plays with questions of proportion and aptness; his method of handling the paint becomes a way of getting at how he feels about the subject. In *The Attributes of the Arts and Their Rewards*—the first version of which was commissioned by Catherine II of Russia—Chardin emphasizes the ultraclear delineation of the rectilinear volumes of books and portfolios, and the bravura rendering of metal surfaces, in a way that risks veering off

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into the blandly virtuosic. The painting is a hullaballoo of perspective, rife with passages of ferociously exhibitionist painting; the rendering of the medals is almost a parody of glibness. Yet Chardin also knew how to give a stability and a density to the image, a kind of magical quietism. There is a slowed-down, abstracted beauty to the painting—in areas of concentrated, full-strength color, especially a penetrating red; in layered strokes of warmer and cooler whites that describe the architectural plans; and in the singular elegance of crisp, somewhat viscous brushtrokes—all of which gives us a sense of the artist's autonomous eye as he contemplates the exigencies of his "official" subject.

The Ray and *The Attributes of the Arts and Their Rewards* are practically the first and the last paintings that you see in the retrospective at the Metropolitan. They feel atypical for Chardin, at least if one believes, as many people do, that an element of heedless improvisation that comes to the fore in his later still lifes is the essence of the man. Yet if it is a miraculous inevitability that clinches his most "spontaneous" compositions, the reverse must be true when he tackles one of his big, allegorical assignments. Chardin's work is always an amazing combination of hot and cold, whether the subjects are servants at work in a kitchen, mothers instructing their children, children at play, a smoker's accoutrements, game animals, pots and pans, a vase of flowers, a few pieces of fruit.

COURTESY THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Jean-Siméon Chardin, "The Silver Goblet," c. 1768

I had a feeling at this show that I have not experienced on any other occasion: the sense of knowing, as you walk into a room, that you are going to be fascinated by anything that you look at. Of course, not everything works out just right (which is often owing to the poor condition, or the crude restoration, of a particular painting); but something unforgettable is going on just about everywhere. Again and again, you find yourself establishing an extraordinarily intimate relationship with the canvas.

We know a good deal about Chardin's life, and enough of his observations have been recorded to give us a sense of his vantage point. The man who said that "painting is an island whose shores I have skirted" is an artist we can, in some sense, understand. He has a rather modern feeling for the enigmatic element in the creative process. Yet when we try to reconcile our sense of the magnitude of his achievement with our awareness that he conducted his entire professional life within the Academy, which made no bones about the fact that still life could not compare with history painting, we are confronted with a disjunction, and it cannot merely be dismissed as a matter of historical relativism. Pierre Rosenberg—the director of the Louvre and the chief organizer of this exhibition, as he was of the Chardin retrospective in 1979—is a great student of eighteenth-century French painting, yet even he seems troubled by this disjunction. He is so baffled that he has called his catalogue essay "Chardin: The Unknowing Subversive?"

We know, Rosenberg argues, that Chardin at first aspired to be a history painter and later had the same hope for his son. In some way, then, he wished to play the Academy's game. He certainly worked within the structure of the Academy, where he was widely praised for his judicious handling of complicated matters. Yet what could it have meant to this man, who was more fully the master of the art of painting than any other artist of his time, that his devotion to still life painting would prevent the Academy from ever granting him the privilege of teaching there?

According to Rosenberg, this painter who played by the rules was also unequivocal in stating that when he painted from life he had to ignore all previous rules. To his fellow artists, he said that years of laborious classroom study before casts of ancient sculpture—the Academy's standard practice—counted for little. After all this, he explained, "the eye must be taught to look at nature"; and even when we have studied nature, we are still at "the mercy of our genius," which will probably not suffice. Chardin can sound, sometimes, as skeptical as Giacometti. Yet there he was, a man playing by all the antiquated conventions. You could say that he had no choice. But still we must wonder what he really thought. "Did he realize," Rosenberg asks, "his art challenged a doctrine whose tenets he never dared to oppose? We do not know."

When Rosenberg looks at Chardin's paintings, he sees an artist who "invented pure painting, a new kind of painting," and "opened the door to modernity." Although I think that those formulations are a little too broadly stated, I agree that it does not take a great stretch of the imagination to feel this way after one has spent some time looking at pictures that bring to mind Cézanne's combination of emotional discretion and formal opulence, Cubism's playful mixing of surface design and spatial incursion, and the kind of experimental paint-handling that becomes a keynote in Courbet, Manet, and Matisse. No wonder Proust wrote about Chardin, and Cézanne and Matisse copied his work, and Braque intended his series of paintings of billiard tables (or so I believe) as an homage to the artist whose father had constructed exactly those pieces of furniture for the king.

Yes, it is possible to imagine that Chardin is our contemporary. And yet the urge to regard him as the first figure in a great modern tradition does not feel quite right, for there is something in his art—something marvelous and recalcitrant—that seems to obliterate all great traditions. When Chardin fits grand structures into modest dimensions, he explodes both the Academy's smug estimation of still life painting *and* the Renaissance idea of what it means to be a master. Even in his own day, Chardin's free-floating colors and impastoed surfaces were recognized as a response to the tradition of Titian and Rembrandt, to their fascination with the emotional implications of painterly technique. Still, the ends to which Chardin turns the methods of the

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Old Masters are so distinctly personal as to seem to invalidate the connection, though not in an argumentative or rebellious way. You just feel that Chardin will do what he will do. He keeps defeating our attempts to draw neat lines between where he came from and where he ends up and where we are. His achievement is one of the clearest and most forceful demonstrations of the proposition that tradition—even tradition at its most impersonal—is a profoundly personal matter.

CHARDIN'S SINGULARITY IS fascinating, and especially so now, at a time when most serious artists will agree that the very idea of tradition is up for grabs. He came of age just as Watteau's improvisational fireworks had died out, and after that the general drift in eighteenth-century art was toward chilly academic taste. Compared to the astonishing riches of art in the seventeenth century or the nineteenth century, the eighteenth century was a time of sporadic and idiosyncratic triumphs. After Chardin, Watteau, and Goya, who is there who invents a world that is absolutely his own? Hogarth, perhaps. Some might say Tiepolo. And even if one places David among the greats—or at least acknowledges that he laid the groundwork for the hyperbolic classicism of Ingres and helped to provoke the bursting romanticism of Delacroix—he is an irrelevance to the eighteenth century that Chardin knew.

Chardin's art seems to fit into no particular chain of action and reaction. Contemporaries remarked on his relationship to Dutch still life and genre painting, and we can see that the paintings produced in Holland during the Golden Age, when Amsterdam was a kind of clearing-house for Italian and Northern Renaissance ideas, gave Chardin many clues. Like Watteau, Chardin found in Dutch and Flemish painting a way past the harshness of French classicism; indeed, Watteau's impact on Chardin is probably stronger than we recognize, since certain of Chardin's early figure studies, done in a style reminiscent of Watteau, are lost. Watteau conducted his dialogue with the north through his detailed response to Rubens; but Chardin's debt to Dutch still life painters such as Abraham van Beyeren and Willem Kalf, whatever their considerable virtues, is little more than a matter of points of reference. Chardin does not go head-to-head with a great precursor, as Watteau reacts to Rubens, Ingres to David, or Matisse to Cézanne. When Chardin looks to Titian and Rembrandt, he rejects so much of their rhetoric that the relationship becomes more like a secret assignation than a direct confrontation. Chardin had to go it alone. Paris in his day may have been the artistic center, but it was not a time of heroic figures. And there was Chardin, an ordinary man who painted masterpieces. Who can wonder that he is a hero for artists today?

ORDINARINESS, OF COURSE, was one of Chardin's favorite themes. Luckily for us, he always felt the need to give a little extra to the ordinary. Scholars of eighteenth-century art tend to argue that he was not much of an intellectual, but there is something in the temper of Chardin's realism, in his sense that close, almost scientific observation can yield magically revelatory experiences, that is in line with some of the most progressive thinking in Europe in the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. Those ultrasimplified still lifes that Chardin produced in the 1750s and 1760s, in which a few humble objects are simultaneously set under a microscope and dissolved in a romantic atmosphere, present quotidian experience with something of the adoring lucidity that poets would bring to the study of folklore in the years to come. Chardin was at home in a world in which rationalists and romantics had not yet become carried away by their differences.

There is a dreamy element to these paintings, which Chardin has the audacity to present as the simple truth. Inanimate things are set under a spell. They are animated—they are enchanted—by the stroke of Chardin's paint-loaded brush. In his most subtly designed still lifes, where the elements are arranged as dispassionately as if they were chess pieces, there is often an element that disturbs. In *The Smoker's Case*, which is in many respects the most lusciously formalized of all Chardin's compositions, the almost classically serene array of interlocking rectangular and triangular forms in two and three dimensions is literally set on fire when you notice that the bowl of the long-stemmed pipe contains a red-hot cinder from which curls a bit of smoke. At that point it occurs to you that at any moment a human hand is going to appear and pick up the pipe—and change the composition. It's as if, in a flash, you see Gulliver among the Lilliputians.

So these worlds of Chardin's are not as stable as they appear. (We should have inferred this from the boy building a house of cards and the young man blowing a bubble.) In Chardin's paintings, pitchers spring to life, and people turn to stone. He devoted a good deal of time in his middle years to studies of domestic life, and these scenes, often small in scale, have a ritualized, storybook quality. There is a flicker of a narrative, a glimpse of a good child or an industrious servant, and in the engravings after the paintings that eighteenth-century publishers sold to an eager public, Chardin's elusive scenarios were fleshed out by means of moralizing verses printed beneath the images. This urge that Chardin's contemporaries felt to clarify his stories is interesting, for it suggests that even they found the subjects a bit evasive, at once enigmatically slender and troublingly open-ended. Chardin will bring all his powers of concentration to bear on any old moment in eighteenth-century life, and the effect can be uncanny.

CHARDIN'S FIGURE PAINTINGS are fairy tales for grown-ups—but maybe that is a way to describe all his work. That the power of fairy tales has to do with their being stories with a past is perfectly consistent with Chardin's work, for there is something in the straightforwardness of his presentation—which has none of the flickery, almost cinematographic quality of Boucher or Fragonard—that can feel primordial, elemental. Although some of his still lifes contain elegant objects that are products of France's eighteenth-century luxury market, many others suggest the primitive kitchens in story-book cottages or castles. The earthenware pitchers in Chardin's still lifes are of a variety that had been produced in France since the fifteenth century. The props in his still lifes are often not that different from those in a Flemish annunciation; his kitchens and his drawing rooms are the same old, archetypal stomping grounds.

True, Chardin's genre scenes can give us a riveting sense of eighteenth-century ordinariness; the Goncourts saw them that way. But in Chardin's foursquare directness they also saw a revival of seventeenth-century tastes, of what they referred to as an "intimate, familiar art, neglected in France since Abraham Bosse and the Le Nain brothers." In the paintings of the Le Nains, daily life is presented with a monumental plainness—almost with the bluntness of woodcuts—but it is the plainness of extremely sophisticated artists. (Picasso and de Kooning admired their work.) Thinking of Chardin's genre scenes, I am reminded of Meyer Schapiro's essay on Courbet and popular imagery, with its suggestion that certain kinds of naturalism are related to a study of the crude immediacy of images found far from the high art traditions. In Chardin, such connections do not have the ideological implications that they have a century later in Courbet; yet the appealing stiffness of some of Chardin's figures does recall folk art, or at least

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the kind of illustrations that would not have passed muster with the engravers who were Chardin's colleagues in the Academy. Chardin uses that undercurrent of primitivism to give his images a rootedness.

Philip Conisbee, in his excellent book on Chardin, suggests that some of his paintings—the boy blowing bubbles, the women in the kitchen—may derive from illustrations in the kind of emblem books that were popular in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Holland. These images and the accompanying texts were a kind of compacted assemblage of folk wisdom, religious instruction, and arcane knowledge. The Dutch emblem books were an effort to infuse homespun stories with deeper meanings, with classical and Christian meanings that had been taking on dangerously independent implications in the freer atmosphere of the High Renaissance and that were now, in the wake of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, being chastened, reined-in, conventionalized. The emblem books were experiments in contemporary mythmaking. Who can wonder that Chardin would have seen possibilities here?

Every detail of eighteenth-century dress may be exactly right in these paintings, yet these boys at play and these servants in the kitchen are engaged in activities that feel ancient—so ancient that they might as well be images on a wall in Pompeii or Thebes. Strangely enough, Chardin's figures achieve this almost primitive monumentality despite the aura of sticky sentimentality or fussy conventional feeling that clings to his impressions of a mother supervising her daughter's prayers or a servant going about her daily rounds. They may be bromides, but they are so beautifully hewn that the ordinariness becomes sphinx-like, and quietly oracular. Canvases such as *The Return from Market* or *Saying Grace* suggest some immemorial meaning, a meaning that Chardin has not so much discovered as excavated.

I am serious about the idea of excavation. If you want to know why *Saying Grace*, that most unctuously Emily Post-ish of all Chardin's subjects, is such an unfathomable enigma, you would do well to begin by attempting to reconstruct the painting's floor plan. Manet and the Impressionists may have admired Chardin, but his supreme mastery of effects of light and shade sometimes seems more like a smokescreen than anything else, a way of disguising the fact that he is in many respects less a poet than an archaeologist or an architect. There is a fascinating experiment that may be performed with Chardin's paintings, and all you need

Jean-Siméon Chardin, "Saying Grace," 1744

is a pencil and a piece of paper. Instead of analyzing the array of objects and figures as they are arranged on the canvas, try and determine how figures and furnishings—or pots and pans—are situated on a ground plane. What you will find is an underlying geometry that is quite as complex as in the figure compositions of Piero, Masaccio, or Raphael.

In *Saying Grace*, two young girls are seated at a round table, while their mother, standing by her chair, serves the porridge as she urges them to say their prayers. This is everyday life in eighteenth-century France, until you begin to imagine Chardin plotting the arrangement of his immortal toy theater—then you realize that what we have here is some kind of Constructivist pinwheel of circles, more circles, and radiating angles. The table is a perfect circle—a planet—that encloses other circles (the plates, the porridger) as well as angles (the 120-degree angle made by the two spoons). From these circles and angles Chardin generates the entire room. The positions of the three chairs around the table suggest three rays, extending from the still center of the table. The placement of the girls' chairs creates a wedge, with perhaps a 120 degree angle; their mother, standing equidistant from both of her daughters, might be said to occupy 240 degrees. Everything is a matter of circles, angles, degrees. Note the brazier in the lower right corner, with more circles and angles; and the toy drum on the back of one of the girl's chairs, which is an angled circle. Now consider the scene as captured by the rectangle of the canvas, and there is another 120-degree angle—the bend of the mother's body. The mother in *Saying Grace* is not just any mother. She is the mother who occupies 240 degrees and bends at 120 degrees to speak to her daughters.

This is the arcana of the everyday. The floor plans of Chardin's paintings have a game-board elegance. And the figures move with a hieratic elegance. Their poses—bent, upright, seated front to us or back to us—are not life studies as much as they are emblamatic situations selected from a range of anatomical possibilities. The woman who bends at the waist is a particular woman, but she is also all the women who bend that way. The same is true of the woman seen from the back framed in the doorway. This is a taxonomy of genre, but a heartfelt taxonomy, for even after you have begun to uncover the circles and angles in *Saying Grace* there is still the matter of painterly touch, of the spectacular balancing of half a dozen or more differently grayed whites, of naturalistic rendering and anatomical stylization.

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GOING THROUGH THE Chardin retrospective at the Metropolitan, you find that there is no end to the artist's variousness. We may observe his unprecedented variety in paint-handling, ranging from the brush loaded with relatively thick paint that is dragged across the surface in still lifes of the 1730s, to the tiny dabs of different colors in many genre scenes, to the watercolory blues in a painting of dead game from 1755, to the quick jots and dashes of heavy paint in the late still lifes. Looking at his painting of a young draftsman, I find myself trying to figure out exactly how many colors I can find in a square inch of the back wall. (There are certainly six, maybe more.) We can see how the small still lifes of the late 1750s, which are among Chardin's most beloved paintings, recapitulate the informality of the works of the 1730s, with an easier, more devil-may-care attitude toward the interlocking and overlapping of shapes. We observe Chardin experimenting with oval formats, and counterposing rectilinear structures to the curved edge in ways that will be echoed by Picasso, Braque, and Mondrian. And there are singularities, such as the painting of a vase of flowers, of which André Malraux apparently commented that Chardin had tackled the most difficult harmony of all, a harmony of blues and browns.

And yet even with all of these riches, the show at the Metropolitan leaves out whole areas of Chardin's achievement. We see none of the mid-sized but very complex still lifes of the 1760s—*The Jar of Olives*, *The Brioche*, or *The Butler's Table*—and they are wonders in his art, each a separate kingdom, with its own terrain, architecture, climate, and customs. That some of these paintings had to remain in the Louvre is understandable. It also makes perfect sense that Chardin's pastel self-portraits and portrait of his wife should not have left Paris, for pastels are among the most delicate of all works of art, and each time they are moved the vibrations will cause them to lose significant amounts of pigment. But even if those last pastels are not here, they will be on the minds of everybody who knows them.

The eighteenth century was a great period for pastels, but only in Chardin does this softest, most yielding of media reveal its adamantine logic. He took up pastels at the end of his life, when dangerous physiological reactions to the lead in paints forced him to abandon oils, and he made the medium absolutely his own. Regarding himself through a set of spectacles, he is a bold yet elusive presence. He seems pragmatic, confident, quietly amused. Wondering at the meaning of the face in this self-portrait, Proust remarked that "many of us have been puzzled by the meaning or the intention behind what an old person has said, or by a certain look, a twitch of the nose or puckering of the lips. We sometimes smile at old people as if they were old but charming lunatics." Chardin is a reticent painter, and Proust enjoys spinning a novelistic fantasy around what this fascinating face does not say; but when we connect the man's face with the man's work we can see that his reticence is not so much a principled stand as it is a practical matter: the reticence of the craftsman, but the craftsman who is a genius.

Exhibited at the Salon at the end of Chardin's life, the pastel portraits caused a sensation, in part because they revealed him to be the very thing that everybody had thought he was not: a great psychologist. Looking at the pastels, you suspect that Chardin was an artist who could be whatever he cared to be, and this makes the slight opacity of many of his figure paintings all the more interesting. Since we have only the tiniest handful of drawings that can be ascribed to him, it is often said that Chardin was deficient as a draftsman; yet it seems to me that when you look at the drawing in the paintings this view becomes unsupportable.

Chardin is not one of those great artists who depend more on certain skills than on others. I don't think that he uses color, for example, to carry his drawing. He seems equally a master of color and design, of painterly touch and structural deliberation. There is a certain kind of overcompensation that you never feel in Chardin's paintings—as you do, say, in Watteau's, where the slightly improvised beauty of the compositions seems to be pulled out of his strength as a figure draftsman, or in Ingres, who finds exactly enough coloristic inspiration to send his portraits into the stratosphere.With Chardin, the magic is in the way that every side of the equation—linear invention, painterly delicacy, and so forth—rises at just the right moment to take its place.

Chardin's mixture of exactitude and fluidity might be regarded as particularly eighteenth century or particularly French, but in the end it is just Chardin, and it is without parallel. Perhaps his spirit is essentially dialectical. In his work there is always insistent realism and unexpected poetry, rigorous linear pattern and an ineffable painterly touch, inevitability and accident. Whatever he did, he was at the same moment doing the other thing. One of his most interesting remarks seems to underscore this idea. After listening to a fellow painter go on and on about some technical matter, Chardin is said to have interrupted: "You should *use* color, but *paint* with your feelings." Thus did one of the greatest craftsmen come close to dismissing the idea of craft.

Chardin's paintings leave us gasping

Under the Language Sea

Through the velvet silence
that sustains me, nouns
dart, their gills pulsing

like adjectives, their fins
delivering them up
like verbs. I can almost

hear oxygen trickle through
their tiny capillaries, sifted
from the liquor of the sea,

almost predict how and when
immanent electricity will
fire them with blue-green light.

They ease around me, but after
lingering a while they'll pass on their way,
tails thrashing,

tiny currents settling at their backs into
usual darkness. Between visits I'll
simply hold myself

attentive, maintaining life afloat
among seizures and checkbooks, asphalt
and mailmen, unbreathing

beneath the glittering sea-surface,
insentient as a black
sea-cucumber
or inching starfish.

Peter Davison

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for explanations. No wonder that Diderot, as he watched the paintings appear, year after year, could sometimes do little more than speak of their magic. Near the end, looking at *The Attributes of the Arts and Their Rewards*, he sounded almost amazed that old age had not yet "stolen" Chardin's "magic wand." With Chardin, magic seemed to have become an everyday matter. But we expect nothing less of an artist who paints fairy tales for grown-ups. ■

The Public Vanishes

By PAUL STARR

Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community by Robert D. Putnam

(Simon & Schuster, 541 pp., $26)

BY A VARIETY of measures, popular involvement in politics and civic life has atrophied during the past three decades. Voter turnout has dropped; elections are now typically fought on the air rather than on the ground; membership in a wide range of civic organizations has slumped; and a smaller proportion of people say they read newspapers or even watch the news on television. These trends could hardly please anyone who cares about the republic, but they have been particularly disturbing to liberals. The most intense periods of liberal reform during the past century—the Progressive era, the New Deal, and the 1960s—were all times when the public was actively engaged, and new forms of civic action and participation emerged. Reforms in that tradition are unlikely to succeed again without the same heightened public arousal, which not only elects candidates but also forces them to pay attention once they are in office.

Nobody has done more in recent years to illuminate the problem of civic disengagement than Robert Putnam. During the mid-'90s, he published a series of articles that provided quantitative evidence for the decline in participation, and he explained it as part of a more general fraying of the social fabric. America, Putnam contended, was experiencing a general loss of social connectedness—or, to use the term that he adopted, a loss of "social capital"—as membership sank in social groups of all kinds, not just those explicitly directed at civic ends. In what became the defining example of his enterprise, Putnam observed that even though bowling was increasing, bowling leagues were declining, and so Americans were "bowling alone."

While drawing considerable attention, Putnam's articles also drew strong dissent from critics who questioned his analysis of the causes of change, his theoretical framework, and even his claim that civic engagement was falling. These disputes required not only more evidence, but also more reflection—and that is what Putnam has now provided in his book. The fruit of a substantial research enterprise, *Bowling Alone* provides important new data on the trends in civic engagement and social capital, a revised analysis of the causes of the decline, an exploration of its consequences, and ideas about what might be done. The book will not settle the debate, but it is a formidable achievement. It will henceforth be impossible to discuss these issues knowledgeably without reading Putnam's book and thinking about it.

Although in some respects more nuanced, the book makes even more sweeping claims about the "collapse of social capital" in America than Putnam's earlier and appealingly tentative articles. With the benefit of more data, Putnam now sees the change as more pervasive and consequential. The breakdown of social connections shows up not just in civic organization, but also in everyday sociability, with pernicious effects on education, health, and happiness as well as democracy. No class, no ethnic group, no religion, no region is exempt from the lamentable trend. Much of the material that Putnam presents in support of what I will call his "extended" thesis about social capital (as opposed to the "core" argument about civic engagement) is powerful and disturbing; and he makes a convincing case that civic engagement has declined in America. But he does not make an equally strong case that social capital, in the aggregate, has diminished. And even if Americans are less socially connected than they used to be, trying to solve that problem—which is what Putnam asks us to do—may not be the most efficacious way of increasing civic engagement.

Bowling Alone is indispensable in one respect that might initially be unappreciated: as a historical study. Putnam is not arguing that Americans have always been too individualistic and insufficiently devoted to civic life. He acknowledges, on the contrary, that the United States has a rich tradition of political and civic association, as de Tocqueville and others observed in the nineteenth century. Indeed, Putnam maintains that civic engagement was actually rising for two-thirds of the twentieth century, until a sharp decline set in during the last third. This historical reversal is the central question of Putnam's book—and he finds one straightforward answer to it.

"THE SINGLE MOST important explanation for the collapse of civic engagement over the last several decades," according to Putnam, is "generational math." Americans born between 1910 and 1940 have contributed disproportionately to civic life throughout their lives; they represent, in his phrase, America's "long civic generation." And the core group, born between 1925 and 1930, who came of age during the Depression and World War II and first voted in 1948 or 1952, have been "exceptionally civic—voting more, joining more, reading more, trusting more, giving more." In 1960, the long civic generation constituted two-thirds of the electorate; but by 1992, it was down to one-third. Its replacement by the less civic baby-boomers and the even less civic Xers is the principal story of Putnam's book, insofar as the book is about civic engagement.

But there is also a second story in the book, which Putnam merges with the first under the concept of "social capital." This is the pervasive decline in face-to-face sociability: trend data show that fewer Americans invite friends over for dinner or for the evening, visit their neighbors, go on picnics, play cards, or participate in a variety of other social activities. Yet the causal process here appears to be different from the one affecting civic engagement. Putnam finds

PAUL STARR is co-editor of *The American Prospect* and professor of sociology at Princeton University.

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that the declines in "voting, political interest, campaign activities, associational membership, and social trust [as well as church attendance] are attributable almost entirely to generational succession.... By contrast, the declines in various forms of schmoozing, such as card playing and entertaining at home, are attributable mostly to society-wide changes, as people of all ages tend to shift away from these activities." And declines in still other, mostly noncivic social activities reflect some combination of the effects of generational succession and "society-wide changes" affecting all age groups. The latter changes include the growth of electronic media (particularly television), pressures of time and money (including the squeeze facing two-career families), and suburbanization, sprawl, and commuting.

This difference in causal lineage between civic activity and other social activity seems critical to me, though Putnam seems to forget it when he summarizes his causal analysis a chapter later. There he bundles civic engagement together with sociability, and concludes that half of the decline in "social capital" is due to generational turnover, another quarter of it is due to television, and the remainder is the consequence of time pressures and money pressures and suburbanization.

But if changes in civic engagement are "attributable almost entirely to generational succession," why blur the picture? As far as civic engagement is concerned, the critical question is why successive generations have changed. Perhaps, as Putnam believes, the advent of television had a formative influence on Americans growing up after 1950. But his data cannot resolve this issue, and it seems entirely plausible that most of the explanation for generational variation in civic engagement lies elsewhere. As his own narrative suggests, our public experience has changed dramatically in the decades since the Depression and World War II. Politics and civic life once seemed to make imperative claims on Americans, to offer avenues for participation, and to reinforce the sense that government could be made to work. The public world has since become less urgent, more remote, and more tainted. What the generational differences may record is principally the imprint of this history on successive groups of Americans as they have come of age.

WHILE LEAVING MUCH unresolved about the causes of civic disengagement, Putnam does provide a satisfactory answer to some previous criticism. One frontal assault on his early research argued that he had counted the membership only of traditional civic organizations and relied too much on one source of data for overall rates of civic activity. In *The Ladd Report*, an attack on Putnam's work published last year, the public-opinion analyst Everett Carl Ladd claimed that the decline of civic engagement was a myth. The growth of new civic organizations had made up for the decline of old ones, Americans were just as politically active as they had been, and charitable giving and volunteering were on the rise.

On these points, however, Putnam's book presents a more amply supported and carefully thought-out analysis than Ladd's book. One of Putnam's key sources is a monthly Roper survey asking Americans about their involvement in a dozen civic activities, such as writing letters to Congress, signing petitions, attending rallies and public meetings, working for a political party, serving as an officer or committee member of a local organization, and running for office. On average, the proportion of Americans reporting any one of these activities declined 10 percent in the 10 years from 1973–1974 to 1983–84, and then fell another 24 percent in the next ten years. The younger the age group, the greater was the decline: over the entire 20-year period, civic activity dropped 44 percent drop among those aged 18 to 29, compared to just 11 percent among those over age 60. Or to look at the picture another way: the proportion of people who reported none of the civic activities rose by one-third, from 46 percent to 64 percent. These and other data make it hard to take seriously Ladd's claim that the decline in civic engagement is a chimera.

Not all of the empirical issues raised by the critics, however, are slam-dunks for Putnam. Has total membership in civic organizations declined? Survey data suggest little change, but face-to-face civic activity has dropped as groups with local chapters have given way to groups that count as members everyone who sends in a check in response to a direct-mail appeal. Members of chapter-based organizations are more likely to know each other and to work together; direct-mail groups generally underwrite professionals based in Washington. It seems entirely reasonable to say that the shift from one to the other represents a decline in civic engagement.

Have charitable contributions declined? *The Ladd Report* says they have not, citing numbers showing an increase. But, as Putnam points out, we spend more on nearly everything today. The important question is the share of income that Americans devote to charity; and by that measure, charitable giving has dropped sharply. And Putnam applies the same tough but reasonable scrutiny to three developments that critics hail as contradicting his argument about civic engagement. Many people have invested utopian hopes in the rise of the Internet, but Putnam doubts it is contributing to civic involvement. He acknowledges that there has been growth in support groups, but he insists that these are concerned with their own members' psychological well-being rather than with any civic interests. He accepts survey data that illustrate an increase in volunteering, but he observes that if people are asked whether they have worked on a community project, the increase vanishes. Moreover, the rise in volunteering shows up only among two age groups: it has doubled among Americans sixty and over—the long civic generation—and increased among Americans in their twenties, while declining in every other age category. The rise in volunteering among young people is just about the only data in *Bowling Alone* that provides a basis for hope about the future.

BUT THESE TRENDS raise another problem. In his extended thesis, Putnam argues that America has seen a general decline in social capital, which he equates with social networks. The basic idea is that just as individuals derive benefit from their social connections (for example, in getting jobs), so a society derives a public value from stronger connections among its members. Even if the Internet, support groups, and volunteering do not increase civic engagement, they do represent new or expanding bases of social networks. Indeed, during the past third of a century, there has been spectacular growth in telecommunications, not just the Internet. Many of us are more networked than ever, capable of maintaining far more long-distance social ties than in the past. One reason for the decline in face-to-face sociability may be that Americans can now sustain relationships with people whom they do not regularly see face-to-face. From Putnam's data, however, we have no way of adding up the pluses and the minuses. There is no overall metric of social capital. The sheer breadth of the concept, covering all kinds of social ties, makes it impossible to judge whether social capital is rising or falling. The methodological problems in answering this question may not be insuperable, but they are certainly daunting.

At the end of his book Putnam turns to the future, and he tries to be upbeat, though there is little in the preceding analysis that offers encouragement. On the basis of generational turnover alone, public participation should continue to fall. Inexorably, the long civic generation

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is dying off, and it is being replaced by generations that are far less civically inclined. In his penultimate chapter, Putnam sees a basis for optimism in an analogy with the Progressive Era, the years between 1900 and 1920, when many of our major civic organizations, such as the League of Women's Voters and the NAACP, were founded. Like all historical analogies, however, this one has its limitations. The Progressives created nonpartisan civic organizations in part as a counterweight to what they saw as the excessive power of political parties, and the reforms of that era actually reduced voter turnout. Today, parties as well as civic organizations are weak, and we could use more participation in both.

Prescription is not the strength of Putnam's book. In the final chapter, written in a hortatory style that seems better suited to speeches, Putnam makes a series of "challenges" to leaders in various realms of life to rebuild social capital. "I challenge America's clergy, lay leaders, theologians, and ordinary worshippers," he writes in a typical passage. "*Let us spur a new, pluralistic, socially responsible 'great awakening,' so that by 2010 Americans will be more deeply engaged than we are today in one or another spiritual community of meaning....*" (The italics are his.) The charge seems hopelessly vast. And if the aim is renewed civic engagement, then rebuilding social capital may be too indirect a way to do it. People participate in politics and civic life because they want to accomplish particular purposes, which are often highly partisan and divisive. They are not likely to connect with others out of a belief that America needs more connecting.

In search of general agreement with his analysis, Putnam avoids confronting the political implications of renewed civic engagement. Sleepy times are no problem for a conservative, business-oriented politics, but they pose a nearly insuperable barrier to a politics aimed at significantly reducing inequality or repairing democracy. Such efforts are likely to produce far more conflict than the civic uplift and the community togetherness that Putnam seems to hold up as an ideal. America certainly would be a better place if we had more picnics and bowled more in leagues, but I am not sure that activities of this sort would spill over significantly into the public arena. People are likely to come back to politics and civic life only if the stakes are compelling and the possibilities of public improvement are genuine.

Nobody has a sovereign remedy for our civic atrophy, and I do not mean to be too harsh on Putnam. One test of a book is its value to those who disagree with at least some of its conclusions. By that standard, *Bowling Alone* is an important work, rich in its incidental details as well as its general architecture. In one respect, certainly, the book testifies to the moral seriousness of its author: Putnam's research is itself a fine illustration of civic engagement. Not the least of its achievements is that it teaches by example. ■

Being and Knowingness

By Alexander Star

A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius by Dave Eggers

(Simon & Schuster, 324 pp., $23)

Dave Eggers is the editor of a makeshift literary journal known as *McSweeney's*. He is also the founder of a defunct satirical magazine entitled *Might*, a onetime employee of *Esquire*, and the author of this memorably titled memoir, which is chiefly concerned with his family, his friends, and his profound ambivalence about writing a memoir. In recent months, Eggers has become a bona fide literary celebrity. Profiles have been written; specialty websites have been registered; entire Internet discussion areas have been devoted to the burning question of whether Eggers has sold out his siblings, sold out with style, or simply sold out.

According to an observer in *Poets & Writers* magazine, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* may have inspired more subway reading than any serious book since *Gravity's Rainbow*. The appeal of Eggers's book has something to do with its combination of tenderness and tricks. It mixes, and mixes up, pain and humor, self-deprecation and grandiosity, and it does all this with great energy. The language is dexterous; Eggers assembles long sequences of clichés and suddenly drops them on the ground. There is little or no way to know what is coming next. The writer is an angry juggler.

Still, there is a story, and it begins on a relatively somber note. In his early twenties, Eggers is living at home in the Chicago suburbs and caring for his mother, who is dying of stomach cancer. In the midst of this ordeal, he sees his father unexpectedly sicken and die. The suburban home becomes the site of a macabre double illness; it is likened to a grim "factory," to "a train set model in a tornado," and—this is Eggers typically raising, or lowering, the rhetorical stakes to the point of absurdity—to "Grenada." Generally, though, the writing in these passages is subdued, and affecting in its imaginative leaps. His mother's tumor is a "fruit, an empty gourd," a "tarantula," a "balloon." His father's funeral is like a funeral for the "husband of a ghost." The house is dismal and dreary: "Through the small tall bathroom window the December yard is gray and scratchy, the trees calligraphic. Exhaust from the dryer billows clumsily out from the house and up, breaking apart while tumbling into the white sky."

After his parents die, Eggers experiences light-headed freedom and inchoate rage. What follows is alternately jocular and defiant. With an older brother in a think tank and a sister at law school, Eggers takes care of his eight-year-old brother Christopher, who is known as Toph, and the sweetly comic adventures of these two sibling-bachelors give the book much of its flavor. Together they travel to Berkeley and San Francisco, where Eggers faces the challenges of renting an adequate home, enrolling Toph in school, and finding a trustworthy babysitter—not to mention the challenges of starting a magazine, promoting it on MTV, and relieving his peers of their enslavement to the false idols of celebrity culture. To top it all off, the entire package is wrapped with sophisticated postmodern tissues: a series of interviews in which the author interrogates his own methods and motives; a set of "rules and suggestions for enjoyment of this book" ("There is no overwhelming need to read the preface"); a directory of themes ("the knowingness about the book's self-consciousness aspect"; "the part where the author either exploits or exalts his par-

Alexander Star is the editor of *Lingua Franca: The Review of Academic Life*.

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ents, depending on your point of view"); an accounting of the expenses incurred while writing; and an "incomplete guide to symbols and metaphors."

WHAT DOES IT add up to? Eggers pastes together a nuclear-family tragedy, a bachelor-pad comedy, and a magazine-office morality play, and hopes that it all sticks. As orphans, he and his brother feel a strong sense of entitlement: "expecting everything," they travel "toward everything we are owed." Eggers adds that "the sky is blue for us," and that "we are daring and immortal." Being together can be a lot of fun: "We orphans would surely recreate domestic life, from scratch, without precedent"; "you cannot stop us from singing, and you cannot stop us from making fart sounds." But all this free-wheeling fun is accompanied by an almost desperate effort to entertain and distract: "I am making our lives a music video, a game show on Nickelodeon—lots of quick cuts, crazy camera angles, fun fun *fun*! It's a campaign of distraction and revisionist history—leaflets dropped behind enemy lines, fireworks, funny dances, magic tricks." And it also comes with a certain amount of contempt and hostility toward others: "The enemies list is growing quickly, unabated. All these people impeding us, trifling with us, not knowing or caring who we are, what has happened." Or: "We cannot be stopped from looking with pity upon all the world's sorry inhabitants, they unblessed by our charms, unchallenged by our trials, unscarred and thus weak, gelatinous."

In Berkeley, Eggers becomes wary of all the patronizing talk of "what a good brother" he is; at a parents' event, he imagines how he would like to "kick the saggy asses of Berkeley's glowering parentiscenti." At the same time, he eagerly overplays the role of caretaker. His brother is his "opportunity to do everything better," to finish a "project"; "his brain is my laboratory." And so he reads John Hersey's *Hiroshima* to Toph out loud, and worries that if the kid is exposed to the wrong influences, he will grow up to "sell crack or sing in a harmonizing pop group from Florida." When things get unruly, he delivers a "State of the Family Room Address." On a lighter note, he teases Toph for wearing a hat that "smells like urine" and for never having heard of Johnny Bench.

It is an amiable enough relationship, though Eggers acknowledges that "running around hitting each other with things is pretty much the only things we're both interested in." The book's most forthright passages concern the duo's virtuoso frisbee-throwing:

> We throw the frisbee farther than anyone has ever seen a frisbee go.... It's the trajectory that's important, we know that, that the distance relies on both velocity and trajectory, that you have to throw the living shit out of the thing, and also put it on the correct trajectory, an upward trajectory both straight and steady, not too high, not too low, because if it's sent on the right upward trajectory, its momentum will carry it almost twice the distance, the second half on its way down, the second half a gimme, meaning that you need to only provide for half of its distance yourself, its momentum providing for the second half, when finally its forward progress slows and slows and stops and it falls, as if parachuting, and then we move and run under it, our quick steps scratching into the wet sands and when it falls, it falls into our hands, because we are there. We look like professionals, like we've been playing together for years. Busty women stop and stare. Senior citizens sit and shake their heads in wonder. Religious people fall to their knees. No one has ever seen anything quite like it.

When he is not caring for Toph, Eggers works and plays with his peers. In an "inexplicable sort of mass migration," his friends have gathered in San Francisco. They are a "young creative elite" that disdains money, works in shabby warehouses, hangs out with radical bike messengers, and looks down on New York since "you can't even email anyone there yet." Eggers himself paints "fat men's faces, blue goats, and lost socks" onto thrift-store furniture. Then he moves on to doing temp work for a geological surveying company and slaving away in the graphic design department of *The San Francisco Chronicle*, which he regards as a "misuse of creative powers."

At night he attends crowded parties where he spends most of his time "waiting for the bathroom, staring idly at that ubiquitous Ansel Adams print, Yosemite probably", and going to crowded bars, where "we know that the beer has been brewed on the premises because, right there, behind the bar, are three huge copper vats, with tubes running out of them. That is how beer is made." He and his friends listen to bands with names like JFKFC that combine "two or more cultural elements, ideally one high and one low" with a "smugly clever, utterly meaningless result." And they wonder why they are so fixated on MTV's real-life soap opera "The Real World": "We all despise it, are enthralled by it, morbidly curious. Is it interesting because it's so bad, because the stars of it are so profoundly boring? Or is it because in it we recognize so much that is maddeningly familiar?"

Out of this milieu Eggers concocts the idea for a magazine called *Might*. Just as he and Toph wish to reinvent domestic life from scratch, so he and his colleagues aspire to re-shape a generation. After all, he is an "orphan of America," too. The magazine, Eggers hopes, will "inspire millions to greatness ... smash all these misconceptions about us, throw off the shackles of our supposed obligations, our fruitless career tracks ... force, at least urge, millions to live more exceptional lives." His credo is: "All we really want is for no one to have a boring life."

IN THIS SPIRIT, the magazine promises to dismantle the media's dehumanizing images of wayward youth and artificial glamour, and turn people into free-spirited dreamers. It encourages you to "shake the Etch-a-Sketch" and begin each day anew: "knock everything down, every day, so the world, by noon or so, is flat again, wiped clean of buildings and bridges and towers." Eggers goes on: "And every day you'd start from scratch, and everyone'd get together and say, Hey, let's put some buildings there, and, um, over there, let's have a five-hundred-foot stuffed hippo, and there, in front of that mountain, a huge fucking, uh, something else." Together, he and his friends will build a "lattice," create "connective tissue," espouse the cause of "collective youth." It will be Warhol's Factory, but without the drugs, the cross dressers. This vision drives Eggers into fits of self-flagellating ecstasy. He will edit so that others can live: " I will be the conduit. I will be the beating heart. Please see this! I am the common multiplier for 47 million!... I am bursting with the hopes of a generation.... I will bleed if they will love... let me be the lattice ... I want to be the heart pumping blood to everyone." He wants others to "share my suffering," so that he can "dilute" it. "I want everyone to witness my youth."

But if Eggers wants everyone to witness his youth, he also wants everyone to witness his reluctance to display his youth. And so, throughout the book, Eggers invents mock interviews with reproachful or puzzled interlocutors. He imagines his brother chiding him for his transgressions: "You're completely paralyzed with guilt about relating all this in the first place, especially the stuff earlier on." Similarly, a friend charges, "you're just one more person to fit into your tragic story ... you use other people's misfortunes to add drama to your life." In self-defense, Eggers offers aggressive aphorisms: "We are all feeding from each other, all the time." "Privacy," he tells us, is "cheap, overabundant, easily gotten." As for "dignity," it's

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an "affectation," like "collecting scarves." Exhibitionism, finally, is simply a way for people to "celebrate their existence. For his cohorts, "the idea of anonymity is existentially irrational, indefensible." Moreover, "If you're not self-obsessed, you're probably boring."

Is any of this serious? It is hard to say. Eggers is nearly always yelling at us, and we don't know if the yelling is in anger or in jest. When Shelley exclaimed "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!" and implored the West Wind to "scatter" his words "among mankind," he got away with all the excited language because he really meant it. When Nathanael West likened Ms. Lonelyhearts's bursting heart to a "bomb," he was taking his character's volatile mixture of self-sacrificing love, savage aggression, and desperate lust quite seriously. Yet Eggers merely casts his talk of bleeding and bursting around, letting the words fall where they may. This is beatnik prose without the sincerity.

Eggers warns that his book proceeds from the "slightly less self-conscious" to the "increasingly self-devouring." And so it does. In rapid succession, he exhibits an urge toward fame and toward secrecy, toward saving the world and toward harming it, toward meeting girls and toward protecting his brother from girls. But these impulses rarely interact with each other. Eggers's monologues are more like performance art than the dramatization of inner conflict. The book displays a great deal of self-consciousness and very little self-reflection.

Instead Eggers rushes on from defiant rage to self-deprecating humor to utopian exclamation. Almost invariably, his monologues rise to the same mock-hyperbolic climax. Caring for his mother in a crowded suburb, he fantasizes about mauling the neighbors:

> I have plans for them, the nosy, the inquisitive, the pitying, have developed elaborate fantasies for those who would see us as grotesque, pathetic, our situation gossip fodder. I picture strangulations—*Tsk tsk, I hear she's*-GURGLE—neck-breakings—what will happen to that poor little bo-CRACK!—I picture kicking bodies as they lie curled on the ground, spitting blood as they—*Jesus Christ, Jesus fucking Christ, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!*—beg for mercy. I lift them over my head and then bring them down, break them over my knee, their spines like dowels of balsa. Can't you see it? I push offenders into giant vats of acid and watch them struggle, scream as the acid burns, break them apart. My hands fly into them, breaking their skin—I pull out hearts and intestines and toss them aside. I do head-crushings, beheadings, some work with baseball bats—the variety and degree of the punishment depending on the offender and the offense.

In such a passage, Eggers purges his anger, enjoys his talent for invective, and lets us know that he is aware of how absurd and excessive it all is. In the aesthetics of the rant, the impassioned exaggeration and the self-mocking exaggeration are not modified by each other; they simply coexist.

A similar combination of attitudes can be found in Eggers's anxious meditations on "selling out." In an effort to give *Might* greater exposure, he tries to get himself onto the cast of "The Real World." Though he fails the audition, the camera crews nonetheless descend on his offices. MTV wants to film the show's straight-arrow cartoonist Judd as he peddles his drawings to the *Might* staff. Eggers welcomes the opportunity to promote his magazine, but he also wants to make sure that nobody thinks that he or his colleagues take the show seriously:

> We need to make clear to a casual viewer that . . . we are on this show only for the purposes of our own perverse amusement—that, if you look closely, we are winking, smirking ever so slightly, that all this, our meeting with him, the cameras and everything, will probably be used in *Might* as fodder for some kind of wry and trenchant article or ha-ha chart soon enough. We can play it both ways, all ways. We can look into the eyes of this Judd person, whose eyes look like ours, and we can pour forth to him kindness and understanding, and crack jokes with him and make plans with him, and all the while calculating what we might be able to get out of his association, how much of this sort of access we can get without having to too seriously compromise the purity of our own endeavor by fouling it with his presence . . .

What is the purpose of all this running commentary? Does Eggers want to berate himself for taking advantage of an opportunity? Or to take advantage of an opportunity to berate himself? In any case, there is something disingenuous about the performance. He wants to expose the foolishness and the hypocrisy of his younger self, and to make us enjoy his skill at sending up his inferiors. Even now, he is still stuck in the same predicament: he wants to impress himself upon us, and to disavow any responsibility for doing so. He is hostile to his readers' very existence (to be anonymous, he tells us, is to be "taking up space"), and he is desperate to keep them entertained with his "magic tricks."

Ultimately Eggers himself comes to see *Might* as misconceived. He wants to adopt a progressive political platform, but has no idea what to believe. He casts the leaders of Teach for America and the anti-deficit group Lead or Leave as role models, and then subjects them to merciless satire. He would like to advocate the forgiveness of student loans and the provision of better jobs, except that he admits, winningly enough, that no one on his staff has to pay back a loan or even wants a job.

Finally *Might* concocts an ambitious hoax: the editors convince a forgotten child TV actor to stage his own death, and thus deceive the media into embarrassingly fulsome tributes. But it all goes sour. The effort to expose the media's hollowness and manipulations comes to seem hollow and manipulative itself. Publishing *Might*, Eggers tells us, he wanted to balance "being close to where things are happening" and "keeping our distance, an outsider's mentality, even among other outsiders." He wanted to be "successful without being seen as successful, to conquer the world without trying to." He can't pull it off.

As the book ends, *Might* is failing and the tone is darkening. Freak accidents and self-inflicted wounds damage his friends. It is not just his family that is doomed, it is his entire cohort: "San Francisco is getting small and everyone is dying." Toward the end, Eggers travels to Chicago for a wedding; there he also locates his mother's ashes—her "cremains"—and casts them into Lake Michigan. He is not sure if this gesture is "beautiful and noble" or "small and disgusting." Here the disdain for dignity seems earned: holding the ashes makes a mockery of what is venerable for him, he tells us, and we believe him.

But elsewhere the refusal of dignity is something else again. Back in San Francisco, a friend swallows a bottle of pills, and Eggers goes to visit him in the hospital. Attempting to write about the visit, Eggers offers the following meditation on the "end of unmediated experience":

> That's a good detail, the laughing while your friend is having his stomach pumped. People have done that, too. Probably on TV, even, *Picket Fences* maybe. But I could take it further. I should take it further. I could be aware, for instance, in the text, of it having been done before, but that I have no choice but to do it again, it having *actually happened that way*. But then it will

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sound like one of those things where the narrator, having grown up media-saturated, can't live through anything without it having echoes of similar experiences in television, movies, books, blah blah. Goddamn kids! The shrieking is the problem....

So instead of lamenting the end of unmediated experience, I will *celebrate* it, revel in the simultaneous living of an experience and its dozen or so echoes in art and media, the echoes making the experience not cheaper but *richer*, aha! being that much more layered, the depth luxurious, not soul sucking or numbing but edifying, ramifying. So there is first the experience, the friend and the threatened suicide, then there are the echoes from these things having been done before, then the awareness of echoes, the anger at the presence of echoes, then the acceptance, embracing of presence of echoes—as enrichment—and above all the recognition of the value of the friend threatening suicide and having stomach pumped, as both life experience and also as fodder for experimental short story or passage in novel, not to mention more reason to feel experientially superior to others one's age, especially those who have not seen what I have seen, all the things I have seen. Another experience that can be checked off, like skydiving, backpacking through Europe, a ménage à trois.

Oh these fat kids. Look at these kids, those little porkers. Is that a genetic thing? Disgusting, the existence of fat kids.

So I could be aware of the dangers of the self-consciousness, but at the same time, I'll be plowing through the fog of all these echoes, plowing through mixed metaphors, noise, and will try to show the core, which is still there, as a core, and is valid, despite the fog. The core is the core is the core. There is always the core, that can't be articulated.

Only caricatured.

I go in to see him.

It is not an especially edifying epiphany. Eggers disdains "The Real World" for its caricatures, for its ability to "flatten all the depth and nuance" from people. And yet he rarely gives up an opportunity to get a laugh with his own caricatures, whether it is the description of his father whose "'Hey *hey*!' sounded a little too like Fonzie, coming as it did from a gray-haired lawyer wearing madras pants," or his judgment that a friend must have wanted to commit suicide if he had a swimsuit calendar on his wall. As for the sympathy for his friend, it crumbles away upon close inspection. It is not the "value" of the friend's life that he is trying to affirm, it is merely the "value" of his own "life experience."

Early on, Eggers offers a typically winking alibi for such combinations of candor and calculation. It is his goal, he tells us, "to become well-known for his sorrows, or at least to let his suffering facilitate his becoming well-known, while at the same time not shrinking from the admission of such manipulations of his pain for profit, because the admission of such motivations, at least in his opinion, immediately absolves him of responsibility for such manipulations' implications or consequences...." That the author knows his own "opinion" is false does not make it any more true. ■

The Forgotten War

By ALAN TAYLOR

Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and The Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766 by Fred Anderson

(Alfred A. Knopf, 862 pp., $40)

FRED ANDERSON HOPES to rescue the greatest war in colonial North America from its current obscurity. He observes that "the most important event to occur in eighteenth-century North America, the Seven Years' War (or as the colonists called it, the French and Indian War) figures in most Americans' consciousness of the past as a kind of hazy backdrop to the Revolution." Fought between 1754 and 1763 by European empires and their native allies, the war was unprecedented in its global scale, financial costs, and geopolitical consequences. But today few historians and fewer citizens give the war much thought. We are not even sure what to call it. "The French and Indian War," the traditional American name, is a bit misleading, for the British colonists fought three previous wars, between 1689 and 1748, against the French in Canada and their Indian allies. "French and Indian War" also seems parochial, obscuring the campaigns in Europe as well as the global reach through the oceans to the West Indies, West Africa, and India. The label "French and Indian War" is also currently unfashionable for apparently casting blame on one side, summoning up images of rampaging savages egged on by French priests and fur traders to destroy innocent American settlers. That partisan version of the conflict is now associated with the once-celebrated but now notorious nineteenth-century historian Francis Parkman. Europeans (and Anderson) prefer the alternative name, "the Seven Years' War" which better fits Europe, where the conflict erupted belatedly in 1756, than North America, where it began in 1754 and endured for nine years. But "the Seven Years' War" is at least a neutral title that, for want of geographical specificity, can cover the vast range of the conflict without seeming to blame anyone.

The name is but the beginning of the identity problem. In Anderson's view, the Seven Years' War will never receive its due until historians and the public begin to think less of, and about, the American Revolution. In his introduction, he insists that our preoccupation with the Revolution obscures the greater importance of the Seven Years' War. "For indeed, if viewed not from the perspective of Boston or Philadelphia, but from Montreal or Vincennes, St. Augustine or Havana, Paris or Madrid—or, for that matter Calcutta or Berlin—the Seven Years' War was far more significant than the War of American Independence." This is quite a claim. Like so many other historians these days, Anderson imagines scholarship as a zero-sum game, where one subject cannot receive its due because people pay far too much attention to another subject.

To promote the Seven Years' War to epic proportions, Anderson adopts a kind of Rube Goldberg reasoning: for the want

ALAN TAYLOR is a professor of American history at the University of California at Davis and the author of *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (Knopf).

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of a horseshoe a horse was lost, killing a king, losing the battle, costing a kingdom, and changing all of human events. If no Seven Years' War, Anderson insists, then no American Revolution, no French Revolution, no Napoleon, no Latin American independence, and no westward expansion by the Americans. But such after-the-fact reasoning can be stretched infinitely backward, robbing every subsequent event of its "importance." If there had been no War of the Austrian Succession in 1744-1748, there would have been no Seven Years' War during the 1750s. Does that make the former more "important" than the latter?

Since the importance of events lies in their implications for the future, the best case for the Seven Years' War lies in the trajectory that it gave to events that fed into the American Revolution. Most members of the generation that led the Revolution (or fought against it) entered military or political life during the previous conflict, which shaped their expectations as it developed their abilities. And the Seven Years' War created grave new problems that roiled the relationship of the Atlantic Seaboard colonies with Great Britain. Yet Anderson rejects this linkage for casting a shadow backward, obscuring the greater importance of the Seven Years' War, and robbing the whole story of "contingency"—the openness of the past to multiple possibilities.

Embracing contingency against the "teleology" of hindsight, Anderson promises

> a story of violent imperial competition that resulted first in a decisive victory and then in a troubled attempt by metropolitan authorities to construct a new British empire along lines that would permit them to exercise effective control over colonies and conquests. It is not, therefore, a story that has the birth of an American republic anywhere in view.

And yet, readers may rightly suspect that the "troubled attempt by metropolitan authorities to construct a new British empire" had everything to do with the birth of the American republic. Were it not for that connection, indeed, would Anderson devote so much loving detail to exploring the strains in the empire? Historians must honor the contingency of human life, of course; but surely they must not renounce the considerable benefits of hindsight to detect a pattern of development over time.

In fact, Anderson is himself too fine a narrative historian not to give his story the anticipation of the Revolution to come. Once safely beyond his introduction and launched into his story, Anderson freely associates events and people with their coming celebrity in the American Revolution. To explain the origins and the stakes of the war, for example, he dwells at great length on the Ohio Valley of western Pennsylvania during the early 1750s. In particular, he lavishes detail upon a small skirmish fought by a (then) obscure Virginia officer. Surely the prominence of this incident in his narrative is owed to the officer's later fame as George Washington, the Father of a new country. In explaining the origins of the war, a purer devotion to contingency would have given equal weight to Nova Scotia, where new French forts offended the British as much as French activity in the Ohio Valley. For want of Washington's presence, however, Nova Scotia receives less than a tenth of the coverage that Anderson lavishes on the Ohio Valley.

Fortunately for the readers of Anderson's book, dispensing with hindsight is more easily asserted than practiced. In general, Anderson defies his own injunction and produces a narrative haunted by anticipation of the coming Revolution. He emphasizes the emerging animosities between the British and their colonists—in sharp contrast to most recent scholarship, which emphasizes their common culture, identity, and interests until the eve of the Revolution. Anderson early and often identifies the diverse and contentious colonists as "Americans" united

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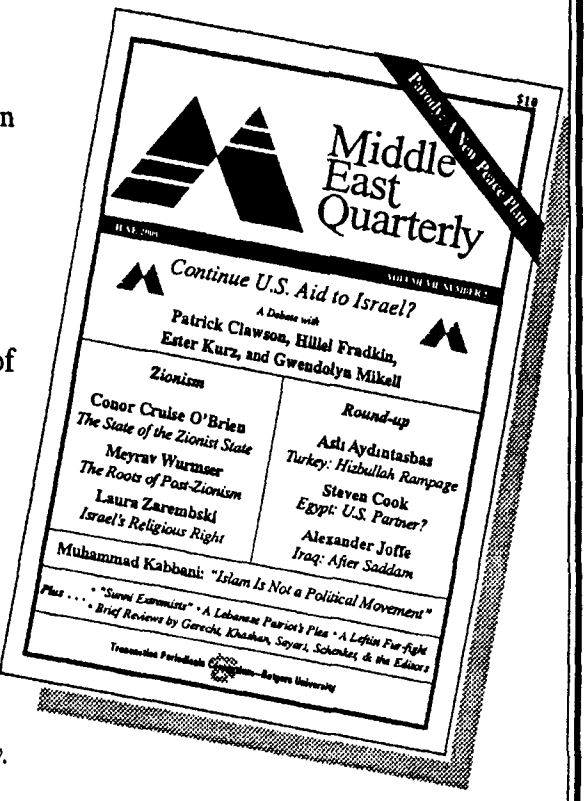

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in a shared identity against their British overlords: "No matter how much zeal he might profess for the common cause, you could still scratch a colonist and, beneath his patriotic veneer, find only—an American."

Writing in the tradition of American nationalism created by the American Revolution, Anderson depicts almost all of the British officers and officials as arrogant and aristocratic twits determined to bully the colonists. George III appears as the caricature of pop history: a "thick-headed adolescent" with a "callow soul." (A more even-handed portrait would concede his conscientious sense of duty, and it would note his limited intellect and imagination.) Of the Britons, only William Pitt, the great political architect of the war effort, is presented in a positive light, primarily because he gave the colonists what they wanted: financial reimbursement in cash for their military expenditures.

IN HIS INTRODUCTION, Anderson also promises to reveal the war from a global perspective that affords Montreal, Havana, Paris, and Madrid as much weight as London and Philadelphia. He does consider other theaters of the war, principally the campaigns in Germany and along the French coast, but he devotes disproportionate attention to British operations on the mainland of North America. Throughout, Britain's foes appear as vague and reactive foils in a war shaped by Anglo-American initiative. Anderson covers the jockeying politicians of London in excruciating detail, but he neglects the royal court of Louis XV of France, and he utterly ignores the internal politics of Spain. Similarly, the political conflicts of the British colonies are examined much more closely than the colonies of New France. Anderson gives less consideration to the French Canadian side of the story than did Francis Parkman in *Montcalm and Wolfe*. Anderson's solid book leaves an opportunity for other scholars to transcend the Anglo-American perspective, and more truly to reveal the multilateral significance of the Seven Years' War.

The bulk of Anderson's long book is far better than his misleading introduction would suggest. Readers who plunge into the text will discover his flair for narrating dramatic events and describing vivid characters. And he has a great, sprawling tale to tell, a story that reveals the central importance of Indians and high finance to the contest of empires. Writing for our anti-heroic time, Anderson narrates the military campaigns with far more irony and far less grandeur than Parkman. For Anderson, victories bring more complications than benefits, while defeats offer silver linings to the losers. In the end, Britain is the biggest loser for winning too much in a war that masked the true limitations of imperial power, provoking a hubris that was fatal to the union of the British empire.

UNLIKE PREVIOUS IMPERIAL wars, the Seven Years' War began in North America, rather than Europe. By 1750, the 1,500,000 British colonists immensely outnumbered the 70,000 French on the mainland of North America. And while the British were concentrated east of the Appalachians along the Atlantic Seaboard, the French were dispersed through the interior over immense distances, from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of the Mississippi. Yet the British colonists dissipated their numerical advantage by their political divisions into thirteen squabbling colonies eager to shunt the burdens of defense onto the others. And the British colonial numbers alarmed the interior Indians, which worked to the French advantage.

In desperate need of Indian allies to counter the British colonial numbers, the French received most natives with diplomatic respect, generous presents, and ready hospitality. French traders more readily learned Indian ways and languages, often by marrying native women, which provided the kinship connections that facilitated alliance and commerce. Making a virtue of their small colonial population, the French could keep promises not to intrude new settlements on Indian lands. Instead they built a long string of small forts and trading posts that stretched along the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi valley. Lightly built and garrisoned and located amid large numbers of Indians, the posts depended upon the local natives for protection. Reaping trade and presents, most Indians welcomed the French posts as assets, instead of resenting them as threats.

The ultimate colonial war erupted in 1754 as French and British officials jockeyed for advantage along the vague and contested frontiers of their colonies. During the early 1750s, Anglo-American settlers, land speculators, and traders pressed northward and westward into the lands of France's Indian allies. Alarmed, the French built new forts in the Ohio Valley of western Pennsylvania and at the Head of the Bay of Fundy on the margins of Nova Scotia. Naturally, the British and their colonial officials regarded both sets of new forts as intrusions on their own land claims, and as a French plot to confine and to strangle the Atlantic seaboard colonies.

AFFILIATED WITH LAND speculators eager to get rid of the Indians and to develop the Ohio Valley, Governor Robert Dinwiddie of Virginia sent troops to oust the French from the Forks of the Ohio (now Pittsburgh). The governor entrusted the command to his land-speculating partner, the young and ambitious George Washington. Embarked on his first command, Washington promptly displayed his inexperience and his poor judgment. Despite the superior French numbers at the Forks of the Ohio, Washington foolishly surprised, attacked, and destroyed a small French patrol. Outraged, the major French force surrounded Washington's camp and compelled his surrender. Hoping to avoid a full-scale war, the French commander allowed Washington and his men to limp back to Virginia.

Informed of Washington's defeat, the British government resolved to send unprecedented sums of money and numbers of troops to help the colonists seize control of their frontier from the French. In the previous imperial wars, the British neglected the colonies, preferring instead to invest their money and soldiers on the nearby European continent and to employ their warships along the coasts of France and Spain. In the new conflict, however, the British made North America their highest priority, mobilizing, equipping, and paying thousands of soldiers, colonial volunteers and British regulars, to attack and to conquer French Canada.

At first the British reaped scant returns on their large military investment in North America. In 1755, the stubborn General James Braddock botched a large thrust to seize the Forks of the Ohio by marching his army into an ambush by French soldiers and Indian warriors. Although the French and Indians had only half as many men, they exploited the forest, firing from behind trees and rocks into the massed and exposed British and colonial ranks. Braddock himself was among the dead. The British debacle had a silver lining, though: Washington redeemed his military reputation by bravely and resourcefully conducting the retreat that saved part of the army.

Braddock had blundered into the ambush because he lacked the Indian allies needed to supply scouts and partisans for forest warfare. Only eight natives accompanied his army, and Braddock ignored their advice. One of them recalled that "he looked upon us as dogs and would never hear anything [we] said to him." Braddock's defeat emboldened

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the Indians of the Ohio valley to attack and devastate the hated colonial settlements in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The raids pinned down colonial troops, which enabled the French to take the offensive in 1756 and 1757 under the able (but contentious) leadership of Governor-General Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil and General Louis-Joseph de Montcalm. They mustered small but effective forces that combined French regulars, Canadian militia, and Indian warriors to capture important British forts on Lake Ontario in 1756 and on Lake George in 1757.

But Montcalm spoiled his victories by alienating many of his Indian allies. A regular officer trained in Europe, Montcalm despised the disorder and the atrocity of frontier raiding—a mode of war that the Canadian-born Vaudreuil championed as essential to the defense of undermanned New France. Montcalm's well-intentioned but ineffectual efforts to deny prisoners to Indians only enraged them. They killed many of the prisoners and returned home in anger with the scalps. In the subsequent campaigns, the French attracted far fewer Indian allies, reducing their ability to defend Canada against the ever-increasing British invaders. As Indian allies dwindled, Vaudreuil blamed Montcalm, producing a bitter feud that ruined their cooperation—with fatal consequences for New France.

IN BRITAIN, THE embarrassing military setbacks of 1755-1757 brought to power a new and more competent administration headed by William Pitt, an acerbic man whose ability matched his towering ego. Despite the escalation of the war in 1756 to include Europe, Pitt clung to the America-first policy, investing even more British troops and money into North America. Pitt also defused the crippling tensions between colonial governments and British commanders over their requisitions of men and supplies. Instead of ordering colonial cooperation, Pitt bought it by reimbursing in cash their costs for men and munitions. Previously reluctant to obey the directives of overbearing British commanders, the colonists became enthusiastically engaged in the war effort once paid in cash. Although politically expedient (and celebrated by Anderson), Pitt's policy was financially reckless. By augmenting the monstrous public debt, the policy saddled the colonists and the Britons with burdens that would violently disrupt the empire after the war.

For the North American campaign of 1758, the British raised some 45,000 troops, half British regulars and half colonial volunteers. Against such large numbers, New France could muster only 6,800 regulars and 2,700 provincials, supplemented by volatile Indian warriors and drafted Canadian militiamen. Winning command of the Atlantic in 1758, the British Royal Navy isolated New France from European reinforcements and supplies. Putting a higher priority on operations in Europe, the French government virtually wrote off Canada, leaving Vaudreuil and Montcalm to muddle and squabble through with their small and shrinking forces. The British command of the seas rendered trade goods scarce at French posts. Dependent upon guns, gunpowder, and shot for their hunting and war, many Indians grudgingly turned to the British for an alternative supply. Deserted by the local Indians, the French blew up their fort at the Forks of the Ohio in 1758 and fled northward, leaving the region in British hands.

Pitt also appointed more competent generals to command the growing forces deployed against New France. In 1758, a British army and fleet commanded by General Jeffrey Amherst captured Louisbourg, a fortified city on Cape Breton Island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The victory cleared the way for General James Wolfe to lead a difficult but ultimately victorious assault on Quebec in 1759. Taking command in New York, Amherst advanced up the Hudson Valley to capture Fort Carillon beside Lake Champlain, the gateway to Montreal. To the west, General William Johnson shrewdly managed a mixed force of Indians, colonists, and British regulars, to capture Fort Niagara at the head of Lake Ontario. In 1760 the British mopped up the remaining French forces in Canada. At Montreal in early September Vaudreuil surrendered to Amherst, transferring all of New France, including the remaining forts around the Great Lakes, to the British.

IN RETELLING THESE battles, Anderson covers ground made famous by Parkman in *Montcalm and Wolfe*. And yet Anderson is at pains never to mention Parkman. Formerly celebrated as the greatest narrative historian that America produced, Parkman has fallen into scholarly disrepute for so vividly expressing the elitist, racist, and nationalist opinions of his class and his time. According to Parkman, Montcalm valiantly defended the glorious lost cause of decaying French absolutism and Catholic superstition (and was uncomfortably saddled with the justly doomed savagery of the Indians). In stark contrast, Parkman's Wolfe was the great romantic hero of Anglo-American nationalism: a brilliant general who selflessly sacrificed his life so that a Protestant, libertarian, and commercial civilization could triumph in North America.

With the bathwater of Parkman's values, recent scholars have generally thrown out his baby: Parkman's flair for assembling telling details and forceful character sketches into a coherent and dramatic story with epic consequences. In recapturing many of these qualities in a book on Parkman's greatest subject, Anderson owes far more to Parkman than he is prepared to acknowledge. Parkman's legacy is especially evident in the prominence that Anderson affords to the retelling of the dramatic battle on the Plains of Abraham before the walls of Quebec, which served as the climax of *Montcalm and Wolfe*. In a perverse tribute to Parkman's influence, Anderson inverts his account of the two generals to better fit our more weary and skeptical times. Both represent nothing more than their own limitations, which proved unnecessarily deadly to the unfortunate men under their command. Anderson follows other revisionist scholars in portraying Wolfe as more lucky than good, a self-centered fool who alienated his subordinates and routinely insulted colonial troops as filthy and cowardly.

YET ANDERSON PROCEEDS a reckless step beyond the other revisionists. He depicts Wolfe's decisive night landing and ascent of the cliffs to the Plains of Abraham as a suicide mission, which succeeded despite the general's hopes for a glorious failure. Wracked by a wasting illness and determined not to survive in disgrace his botched siege of the city, Wolfe hoped only to die in violent glory, apparently callous to the deaths of the others whom he led into futile battle. As Anderson tells it, Wolfe was shocked into confusion by his army's surprising success in scaling the cliffs to appear in ranks before the fortified city bristling with cannon.

> James Wolfe now stood a fair chance of sacrificing twelve superb battalions to no larger purpose than gratifying his desire for a heroic death. We cannot know whether he worried, in the last moments of his life, over the consequences of his actions, or whether he even fully understood them. But his men, lying face down in the mud while cannon shot ricocheted through their ranks and musket balls whistled overhead, could hardly have relished the position into which their commander, ardent for any desperate glory and

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maudlin in his attachment to Gray's *Elegy*, had thrust them.

That Wolfe preferred a quick and glorious death in battle to a lingering sickness is beyond dispute. That he neither cared to win nor to preserve his troops is pretty dubious. In the obscurity of an endnote, Anderson concedes that "there is obviously a substantial degree of speculation in this, for we cannot know Wolfe's state of mind or his plans for the assault." The chief evidence for the suicidal interpretation comes from Anderson's partisan reading of the after-the-fact griping by Wolfe's alienated brigadier generals, who bitterly resented the glorious reputation that their commander reaped for dying while winning. He had not a clue, they insisted; but no one paid them much heed until Anderson needed Wolfe to appear as a selfish and callous fool, the complete inversion of Parkman's self-sacrificing hero-genius.

HOW, THEN, DID Wolfe's army win the most important battle of the war? Fortunately for Wolfe's men (and unfortunately for the French), Montcalm threw away the advantages of the city walls to march out for battle on the Plains of Abraham. "Now for the first time in the war," Anderson writes, "Montcalm found himself out-generaled, and it rattled him out of his wits." Out-generaled? A few paragraphs earlier Montcalm's ascent is presented as suicidal folly; but now Anderson needs Montcalm to appear even more foolhardy and defeatist than Wolfe, and so he must appear out-generaled. Cooler under fire, the British regulars won the day as the French broke and ran back into the city, leaving Wolfe dead on the field and bearing Montcalm back to die within the walls. A few days later, the city fathers surrendered Quebec to Wolfe's successor.

A more plausible reading of the decisions by Montcalm and Wolfe would dispense with romantic fancy and psychological speculation. Montcalm and Wolfe were veteran officers trained according to conventions that were shaped by experiences in northern Europe's broad open fields. Throughout their frustrating service in wooded America, they had to adapt their tactics to local conditions and to irregular fighting men—Indians and colonial rangers. Both generals resented those adjustments, and longed for a good, old-fashioned European battle by massed ranks in an open field. Could either resist that temptation when it appeared on the Plains of Abraham?

Throughout the empire, Britons effusively celebrated the victories of 1759 and 1760, especially Wolfe's victory at Quebec. After the bitter frustration of so many failed attempts in former wars, the colonists and the British felt giddy with relief and delight. They danced around bonfires, fired volleys of cannon, rang church bells for days, lit up the sky with fireworks, and consumed massive quantities of alcohol toasting Pitt, the king, the empire, the royal navy, the royal army, and the colonial volunteers. Horace Walpole facetiously lamented that "our bells are worn threadbare with ringing for victories." Wolfe's death in battle as an apparent martyr to the empire added a note of romantic pathos to the celebrations. In death, Wolfe became larger than life. Walpole recorded an infusion of nationalism as the "whole people . . . triumphed—and they wept—for Wolfe had fallen in the hour of victory!"

THE BRITISH WON by overwhelming the colonial French with sheer numbers of soldiers and sailors. The superior ability of the British to project power across the Atlantic and into North America depended not on numbers alone (for France had a much larger population in Europe) but upon the British superiority in shipping, finance, and military organization. And that superiority reflected the more advanced nature of Britain as a capitalist society endowed with far more liquid capital and financial acumen. The more commercialized British had more money to spend; and they spent it with wild abandon; and they concentrated their expenditures in North America. (The French had to spend most of their resources on their army in Germany.) The conquest of Canada cost the British empire about £4 million, more than ten times what the French spent to defend it. Never before had any empire lavished so much money to wage war on a trans-oceanic scale.

Still, the conquest of Canada was provisional if it was not accepted by France and confirmed by a peace treaty. With victories in Europe, the French might recoup their position in North America. Such a recovery seemed more plausible in late 1761, with signs that the Spanish would at last enter the war on France's side to restore the old balance of power. The ever-aggressive Pitt urged a preemptive strike against Spain. Preferring a new prime minister to an expanded war, the king and the rest of the Cabinet refused, obliging Pitt to resign in October 1761. But the Spanish persisted in their preparations for war, and entered it in early 1762. Far from stemming the British victories, the Spanish entry escalated them. British forces captured Manila in the Philippines and Havana on Cuba, where the Spanish had stored much of their bullion, which enriched the captors as plunder. Another British fleet and army seized the sugar-rich French West Indian islands of Martinique, Dominica, St. Lucia, Grenada, and St. Vincent. These many victories embarrassed British diplomats striving to draw the proud French and Spanish to enter peace negotiations.

At last, the British made peace with the French and Spanish in early 1763, in the Treaty of Paris. The French conceded Canada and all of their claims east of the Mississippi, including the Ohio Valley. The British also retained the lesser of their French West Indian conquests in Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago. To mollify the French, the British returned the major islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Lucia. The victors also restored French access to the valuable fishing waters off Newfoundland by conceding two small, unfortified islands in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. As a sop to their defeated allies, the French gave New Orleans and Louisiana, lying west of the Mississippi, to the Spanish. To secure the return of coveted Havana, the Spanish ceded Florida to the British. The various swaps made the Mississippi the boundary between the British and the Spanish claims in North America. Of course, most of the interior remained in the possession of many Indian peoples, who denied that the European powers could dispose of their lands.

ANDERSON NICELY demonstrates that the collapse of the French empire in North America came as dreadful news to the Indians. No longer could they play the French and the British off against one another to maintain their own independence. Many British traders cheated and abused Indians in pursuit of immediate profit, instead of cultivating long-term relationships as the French had done. Colonial governors no longer made any serious effort to restrain the settlers who flocked westward into the Ohio Valley. Grown arrogant and obtuse from too many victories, the British commander, General Amherst, cavalierly curtailed the presents of guns, gunpowder, and shot that both the French and British had formerly lavished on the Indians to secure their goodwill. What Amherst considered a rational economic measure, the Indians took as a grievous insult. Setting aside their linguistic differences and traditional animosities, leading Indians began to cultivate new contacts and cooperation between their tribes in search of a common redress.

In the spring of 1763, far-flung native peoples rose up to surprise and capture

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most of the British forts around the Great Lakes and in the Ohio Valley. Through the summer and fall, they also raided the settlements of western Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, killing or capturing about 2,000 colonists. But the rebels failed to capture the three largest and strongest British posts: at Detroit, Niagara, and Fort Pitt. Preferring to blame Indian uprisings on a single mastermind, the British called the conflict "Pontiac's Rebellion," after an Ottawa chief prominent in the siege of Detroit. Although more influential than most chiefs, Pontiac could not command the diverse and scattered Indian peoples. For their own, shared reasons and under their own chiefs, the natives rose up in a rebellion that had no central command.

By the summer of 1764, the western rebels suffered shortages of gunpowder, shot, and guns. Without a European supplier, Indians could not maintain their resistance for long. Unable to take the major forts, most of the Indians longed to resume a peaceful trade. At the same time, the British government eagerly sought to end the expensive and frustrating war by recalling Amherst in disgrace. The new and more pragmatic commander, Thomas Gage, recognized that presents and respect for Indians were far cheaper than military expeditions against them. Gradually the various Indian villages made peace, allowing the British to reoccupy the captured forts, in return for more respectful and generous treatment from the post commanders. Sufficiently mollified, most of the Indians would assist the British against their rebellious colonists in the next great conflict in North America: the War of the American Revolution.

THE CONQUEST OF Canada, which made the Indians so anxious, delighted the colonists of British America by offering a vast and fertile continent to their settlement. The colonists also felt proud of their contributions to the war effort, and of their membership in such a powerful, prosperous, and relatively free empire. Within thirteen years, however, the thirteen Atlantic seaboard colonies would revolt, and wage a long war for their independence from the British empire.

As Anderson shows, the imperial crisis and the American Revolution ripened from strains initiated by winning the Seven Years' War. During the war, British authorities began to pay closer attention to the colonies and to rethink how best to administer them. After making such a major investment of money and lives in North America, the British were not about to resume the prewar policy of benign neglect. Impressed by the widespread prosperity of the free colonists, British observers concluded that they could pay higher taxes to support the empire that benefited them so greatly. This seemed only fair to the British, who were overtaxed and had spent so much blood and treasure making North America safe for the prospering colonists.

During the war, British officers and officials were appalled to discover that the colonists routinely ignored imperial regulations that hurt their economic interest. In particular, New England shippers continued to trade with the French West Indies, prolonging the war to the detriment of the empire and the death of many British soldiers and sailors. Members of Parliament and Cabinet officers concluded that the empire was too weak and the colonists were too insubordinate. The British vowed to teach discipline to the colonists, and to reap a greater revenue for the empire.

Victory had not come cheap, doubling the British debt from a prewar £73 million to a postwar £137 million. During the mid-1760s, interest payments on that debt consumed more than 60 percent of Great Britain's annual budget. Moreover, the expanded empire in North America was far more expensive to garrison and to administer. Before the Seven Years' War, the British posted only a few hundred troops in North America. In 1763, the Crown decided to maintain 10,000 soldiers in the colonies, primarily in Canada and the Great Lakes country. With the British people already taxed to the limit, Parliament hoped to pay for the new army by levying new taxes on the colonists.

Of course, the colonists balked at the new taxes, detecting a dangerous precedent ominous to their prosperity and their liberty. Paradoxically, by protesting British taxation, the colonists affirmed their cherished identity as liberty-loving Britons, as they rallied behind the most cherished proposition of their shared political culture: that a free man paid no tax unless it was levied by his own political representatives. The colonists devoutly believed that, without such protection from arbitrary taxation and confiscation, people gradually but inevitably became enslaved by their rulers. In accordance with that conviction, the colonists would pay taxes imposed upon them by their own assemblies but not by the Parliament in faraway London, where no colonist sat.

Instead of seeing the new permanent British army in North America as a source of protection, the mainland colonial leaders came to feel threatened as those troops became both the pretext for raising new taxes and the means to enforce them. After the British made peace with the Indians, moreover, the colonists concluded that the army served to assist the natives—rather than to help the colonists dispossess and kill the Indians. In sum, rather than preserving the North American empire, the new postwar garrisons (and their associated taxes) provoked the crisis which soon lost most of that empire to revolution.

WE CAN EXPLAIN the blowup as the structural consequences of the Seven Years' War, and therefore as beyond the capacity of even the most able leaders to have averted; or we can blame the particular politicians of the postwar era for ruining a still-stable empire. Anderson wants it both ways. In narrating the war years, he depicts the conditions for revolution as already falling into place, as a united and self-conscious American people resented their ties to a bullying and obtuse British elite (with Pitt as a glorious exception). When he turns to the postwar era, however, Anderson insists that capable British leaders in the Pitt mold could have short-circuited the crisis and averted the revolution. Alas, there could be no second act in Pitt's performance. He had bought temporary colonial cooperation at a very heavy cost that British taxpayers could not, and would not, sustain in peacetime. No basis for imperial stability, Pitt's profligate expenditures deepened the national debt and provoked a crisis that no latter-day Pitt could solve.

Anderson also argues that in 1763 the British could have dispensed, and should have dispensed, with both an army and taxes in North America. Of course, Anderson concedes, such a solution would have drenched the frontier in the blood of Indians and settlers as the colonies dictated their terms of conquest. In other words, Anderson insists that the British could have saved a shadow empire by unilaterally surrendering its substance in order to avoid the bother of a revolution. Given that the British eventually lost the colonies, at a still-greater expense in lives and treasure, hindsight insists that they should have folded sooner rather than later. Yet the British elite lacked that luxury, and after investing so much to conquer New France, it could not walk away from the burdens and the responsibilities of empire. Nor could the British have anticipated losing a war of colonial revolution. For better and certainly for worse, the British felt obligated to enforce their notions of order and justice on restive colonists who wanted freer hands to conquer and to develop their own continent for their own purposes. ■

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PHILADELPHIA DIARIST

Life Is Swede

"WHAT YOU LIBERALS don't understand," said the large woman, "is that a moral revival is going on here right now!" A fine moral sweat beaded her brow, and she seemed to be swelling righteously before me. She was covered from head to foot in circular badges and stickers, so that she resembled a third-rate art installation, or perhaps a complicated experiment in acoustics. A minute before speaking to me she had been on her knees, her arms raised to the Lord as if she were trying to catch a very holy football, as the assembled crowd belted out, "Glory, glory, hallelujah!"

THIS WAS THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT'S big moment, perhaps its only moment, at the Republican convention—a Christian Coalition rally in a Philadelphia hotel several miles from the convention center. There had been the obligatory soprano, warbling the national anthem as if it were an exercise in rubato. Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating had further moistened the large assembly by telling them that reports of the death of the religious right were much exaggerated, and that they were every bit as powerful as those running the convention itself. Kansas Senator Sam Brownback stepped up to say that a "great cultural battle for the soul of the country" was under way. And then that battle's four-star general, Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson, appeared, to hysterical whoops and cheers, and welcomed the delegates to "a new millennium of faith and freedom," apparently forgetting that in the last millennium he predicted that the lights would already be out by now, and the Savior gathering in his flock.

ROBERTSON'S SPEECH WAS A DISTILLATION of the Christian conservative agenda. And, as such, it revealed a deep, almost unspeakable obsession with Bill Clinton and the moral degradation in the White House. The world of the Clintons, as Phyllis Schlafly described it to me rather quaintly earlier that day, is one of "drug usage and foul language." For the Christians, Al Gore is only a small devil, not Clinton's large Lucifer. As Schlafly rather unwisely put it, Gore is tied to Clinton, and some of the president's disgrace "has splashed onto him." But if Clinton is the always-present foe, the dark backing behind the mirror, the Supreme Court is the daily enemy, the focus of both the strongest abuse and the most practical political hopes. Robertson said that if Swedes were the most secular people in the world and Indians the most religious, then Americans are Indians run by Swedes, since Americans have been held hostage for the last 30 years by four or five unelected secularists on the Supreme Court. Finally, we have a chance, said Robertson, because "two or three of these unelected officials are getting ready to retire."

YOU HAD TO LOOK HARD FOR THE religious right in Philadelphia. And not just because they've been left off the podium; they are also quietly content. Pat Buchanan's 1992 rage was provoked, in large part, by a fear that George Bush senior would *not* "take back the country." But great hopes are being invested in the former president's son. The Christian right's apparent quiescence is actually evidence of an even greater moral fervor than usual. Jerry Falwell admitted to me that at present the Republicans were "out-Clintoning Clinton," and displaying onstage large numbers of what he hesitatingly called "minority . . . persons." But this was necessary, Falwell acknowledged, as was his movement's silence about abortion: "There's no point in overkill on this subject; George W. must get elected first, and there's no harm in generalities at this stage." Still, Falwell continued, there is nothing to worry about: both Bush and his running mate, Dick Cheney, "are clearly and openly pro-life; everyone knows that they are committed to the Judeo-Christian ethic." The first night of the convention (including its pro-choice keynote speaker?), he said, represented "a spiritual renaissance."

AGAIN AND AGAIN, THE CHRISTIAN delegates repeated this unnerving optimism. As a California woman said to me, with marvelous illogic, "What's the point of going on about abortion? Murder's already against the law anyway, and we all know it." And then, in the same breath, the delegates pointed out that the Christian agenda is barely distinguishable from the politics and values incarnated in the Republican platform and the two Republican candidates anyway. Indeed, it is true that, superficially at least, only the thickness of a communion wafer separates the unofficial Christian agenda and the official Republican agenda. The religious right wants, as Robertson triumphantly put it, "a born-again man in the White House"; the destruction of the Department of Education; the rebuilding of the military and the development of a national missile defense system; a noninterventionist foreign policy; lower taxes; capital punishment; no gun control; and the packing of the Supreme Court so that abortion might be outlawed and school prayer reinstated.

THEY HAVE GROUNDS FOR HOPE ON all these issues, except the abolition of the Department of Education and the noninterventionist foreign policy (though Schlafly announced with pleasure that "someone had tried to slip" the phrase "American internationalism" into the platform statement, and been forced to amend it to "principled American leadership"). Bush and Cheney, they feel, are their men. In particular, Bush—who, I noticed, is now often referred to by his supporters as "G.W.," which not-so-subtly conflates him with America's first patriot—is "comfortable" with a religious language of "values" and "heart." It is a long way from the exile they felt themselves banished to four years ago by Bob Dole and Jack Kemp, both apparent strangers to theology. By contrast, our G.W. has pledged to read the Bible in full every other year.

ANOTHER REASON FOR THIS RENEWAL of Christian optimism is the new vulnerability of the enemy. It is not hard to forgo specifics and cleave to generalities when it is a general moral climate—the Clinton White House—you are fighting: a generality for a generality. Sam Brownback provoked an enormous cheer when he told delegates that in Los Angeles the Democrats were preparing to hold a function at the Playboy mansion. "The values of the Playboy mansion don't belong in the White House!" he railed. As everyone knows, if Gore loses, it will be in large part because of what Clinton got up to with Monica Lewinsky, and the religious right, scenting blood, knows it too. But they think that once they win, there will be a big religious feast for them, and that is the delusion of the chase. Just as surely as fervent left-wingers were disappointed by Clinton's liberal centrism, fervent Christians will be disappointed by Bush's conservative centrism. So, whether Bush wins or not, there will be millions of unsatisfied right-wing Christians across the land. Thank God.

JAMES WOOD

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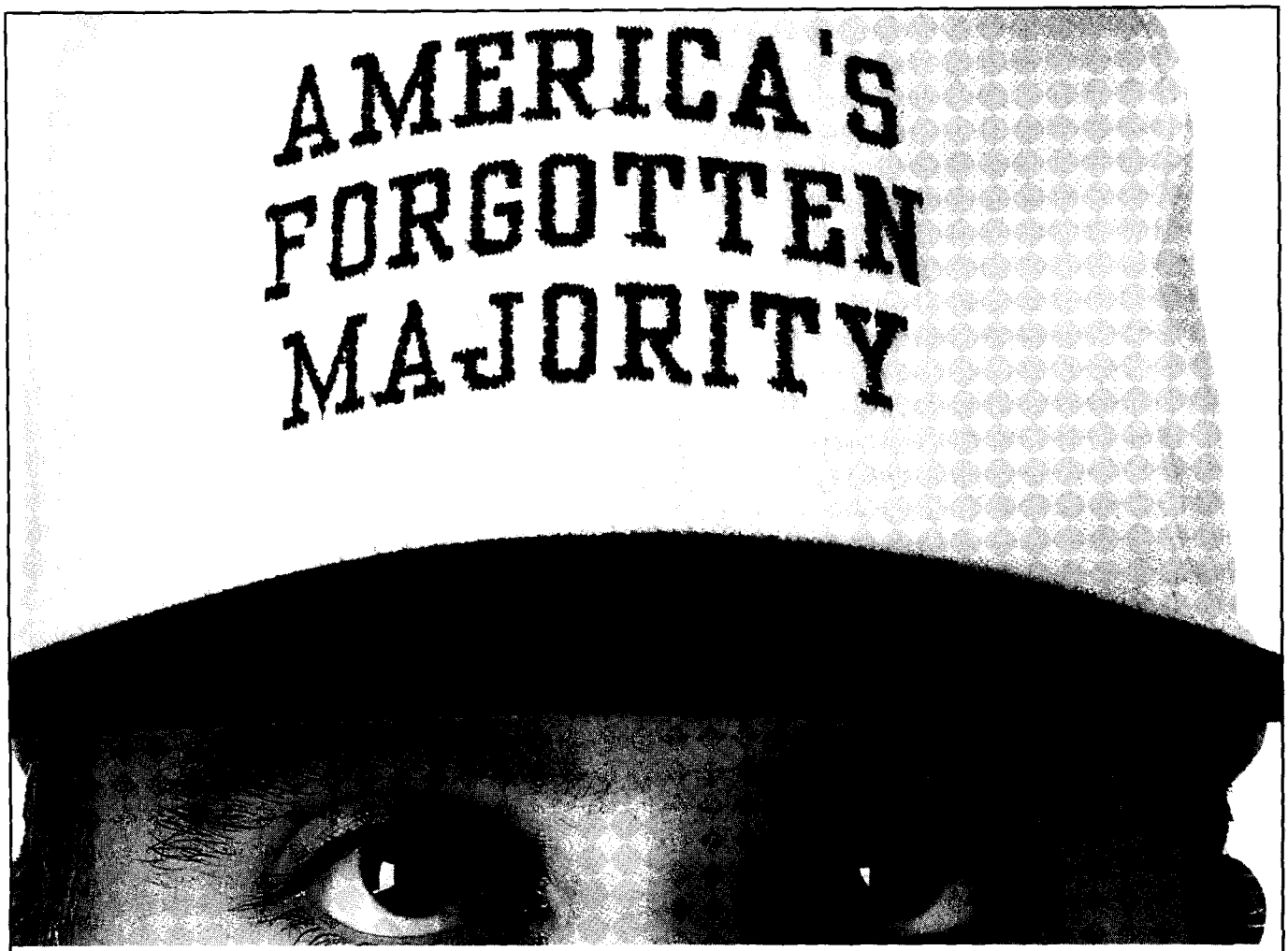

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